

## Council Meeting and RCVS Knowledge Annual General Meeting

Hybrid meeting to be held on Thursday, 7 September 2023 at Seminar Room WG3, Harper Adams University, Newport, Shropshire TF10 8NB at 10:30 am – Council members are invited to attend the RCVS Knowledge AGM

RCVS Knowledge Annual General Meeting	Papers provided to Trustees by RCVSK	
RCVS Council meeting – Agenda	Classification <sup>1</sup>	Rationale <sup>2</sup>
1. <b>Welcome to new members</b>	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
2. <b>Apologies for absence</b>	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
3. <b>Declaration of interests</b>	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
4. <b>Minutes of previous Council meetings and remote decisions</b>		
i. Unclassified minutes: meeting held 8 June and remote decision 30 June – 4 July 2023	Unclassified	n/a
ii. Classified appendix: meeting held 8 June and remote decision 30 June – 4 July 2023	<b>Confidential</b>	<b>1, 2, 3, 4</b>
iii. Unclassified minutes: meeting held 7 July 2023 (AGM)	Unclassified	n/a
iv. Classified appendix of remote decision held 8 – 14 August 2023	<b>Confidential</b>	<b>1, 3</b>
5. <b>Matters arising</b>		
a. Obituaries	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
b. Council correspondence	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
c. CEO update	Unclassified	n/a
6. <b>Matters for decision by Council and for report (unclassified items)</b>		

a. RCVS Delegation Scheme 2023 – Audit and Risk Committee Terms of Reference addendum	Unclassified	n/a
b. RCVS committee schedule	Unclassified	n/a
c. Council Culture Working Group update	Unclassified	n/a
d. RCVS Knowledge update	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
<b>7. Notices of motion</b>	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
<b>8. Questions</b>	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
<b>9. Any other College business (unclassified)</b>	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
<b>10. Risk Register, equality and diversity (unclassified)</b>	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
<b>11. Date of next meeting</b> Thursday, 9 November 2023 at 10:00 am – 4:00 pm (remote)	Oral report Unclassified	n/a
<b>12. Matters for decision by Council and for report (confidential items)</b>		
a. Discretionary Fund	<b>Oral report Confidential</b>	<b>1, 3</b>
b. Major projects – update	<b>Oral report Confidential</b>	<b>1, 3</b>
c. Veterinary Surgeons Act – legislative reform	<b>Confidential</b>	<b>1, 2</b>
<b>13. Any other College business (confidential items)</b>		
a. Comments on classified appendices	Oral report <b>Confidential</b>	<b># TBC</b>
<b>14. Risk Register, equality and diversity (confidential items)</b>	Oral report <b>Confidential</b>	<b># TBC</b>

15. Risk register assessment – annual consideration	<b>Confidential</b>	<b>1, 3</b>
16. Reflective session ( <b>confidential item</b> )	Oral report <b>Confidential</b>	<b># TBC</b>
Dawn Wiggins Secretary, RCVS Council 020 7202 0737 / <a href="mailto:d.wiggins@rcvs.org.uk">d.wiggins@rcvs.org.uk</a>		

### <sup>1</sup>Classifications explained

Unclassified	Papers will be published on the internet and recipients may share them and discuss them freely with anyone. This may include papers marked 'Draft'.
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Private	The paper includes personal data which should not be disclosed at any time or for any reason, unless the data subject has agreed otherwise. The Chair may, however, indicate after discussion that there are general issues which can be disclosed, for example in reports to committees and Council.

### <sup>2</sup>Classification rationales

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Private	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. To protect information which may contain personal data, special category data, and/or criminal offence data, as listed under the General Data Protection Regulation</li> </ol>

## Terms of Reference

### The vision of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons [as agreed in the current strategic plan]

1. Our vision is to be recognised as a trusted, compassionate and proactive regulator, and a supportive and ambitious Royal College, underpinning confident veterinary professionals of whom the UK can be proud.

### Role of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons [derived from the Charter]

2. The objects of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons, as laid down in the Supplemental Charter granted on 17 February 2015 to the Royal Charter of 1844, ie:
  - a. To set, uphold and advance veterinary standards, and to promote, encourage and advance the study and practice of the art and science of veterinary surgery and medicine, in the interests of the health and welfare of animals and in the wider public interest.
  - b. The Charter also recognises those functions provided for in the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966, in terms of the regulation of the profession, and also recognises other activities not conferred upon the College by the Veterinary Surgeons Act or any other Act, which may be carried out in order to meet its objects, including but not limited to:
    - i. Accrediting veterinary education, training and qualifications, other than as provided for in the Act in relation to veterinary surgeons;
    - ii. Working with others to develop, update and ensure co-ordination of international standards of veterinary education;
    - iii. Administering examinations for the purpose of registration, awarding qualifications and recognising expertise other than as provided for in the Act;
    - iv. Promulgating guidance on post-registration veterinary education and training for those admitted as members and associates of the College;
    - v. Encouraging the continued development and evaluation of new knowledge and skills;
    - vi. Awarding fellowships, honorary fellowships, honorary associateships or other designations to suitable individuals;
    - vii. Keeping lists or registers of veterinary nurses and other classes of associate;
    - viii. Promulgating guidance on professional conduct;
    - ix. Setting standards for and accrediting veterinary practices and other suppliers of veterinary services;
    - x. Facilitating the resolution of disputes between registered persons and their clients;
    - xi. Providing information services and information about the historical development of the veterinary professions;
    - xii. Monitoring developments in the veterinary professions and in the provision of veterinary services;
    - xiii. Providing information about, and promoting fair access to, careers in the veterinary professions.

### The purpose of RCVS Council [derived from the Charter]

3. It is laid down in the Charter that the affairs of the College shall be managed by the Council as constituted under the Act. The Council shall have the entire management of and superintendence over the affairs, concerns and property of the College (save those powers of directing removal from, suspension from or restoration to the register of veterinary surgeons and supplementary veterinary register reserved to the disciplinary committee established under the Act) and shall have power to act by committees, subcommittees or boards and to delegate such functions as it thinks fit from time to time to such committees, subcommittees or boards and to any of its own number and to the employees and agents of the College.
4. The Council is also responsible for the appointment of the CEO and Registrar, and the ratification of the Assistant Registrars. Appointment of all other staff members is the responsibility of the CEO and relevant members of the Senior Team.
5. A strategic plan is developed and agreed by Council to facilitate the delivery of these activities and to ensure ongoing development and quality improvement.
6. A delegation scheme that outlines how Council's functions are managed via system of committees and other groups is agreed annually by Council.

### How Council members work

7. In order to enable the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons to fulfil its vision, and to discharge its functions under its Royal Charter and the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966, RCVS Council members will:
  - a. Abide by the Nolan Principles of Public Life;
  - b. Work in the best interests of the public, and of animal health and welfare and public health;
  - c. Respectfully listen to the voices of the professions, the public and other stakeholders, and reflect them in discussions where appropriate, ensuring they are put into context;
  - d. Neither be answerable to, nor represent, any group of individuals;
  - e. Support the College's vision and work towards the success of the College and its functions;
  - f. Live the College's values;
  - g. Act at all times in a constructive, supportive and compassionate manner;
  - h. Exercise a duty of care to the staff employed by the College, working through the CEO and Registrar;
  - i. Recognise the importance of a collegiate atmosphere where robust discussion is welcomed in the formation of policy and multiple points of view are listened to and respected;
  - j. Respect and support the decisions made by Council when communicating externally;
  - k. Communicate College activities and positions to relevant stakeholders;
  - l. Abide by the Code of Conduct for Council and Committee members.

## Meeting Procedure Rules 2021

### Citation

1. These rules may be cited as the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons Meeting Procedure Rules 2021.

### Application and interpretation

2. These rules apply, except where otherwise stated, to general meetings and meetings of the Council and of committees, sub-committees, boards and other bodies transacting College business. The person chairing a meeting of a sub-committee, board or other body shall have discretion to modify the rules in their application to that meeting.
3. In these rules, "member", otherwise than in the expression "Council member", means a person participating in, or who is to participate in, any meeting to which these rules apply.

### Voting

4. All questions relating to any business to be transacted at any meeting shall be decided by a majority of the members voting. The person chairing a meeting shall have a casting vote in addition to that person's original vote, whether or not the original vote has been used.
5. Immediately before a question is put to a meeting the text of the question to be voted upon shall be read out, unless it has been made available in writing to those who are to vote.
6. In the case of Council meetings, voting in relation to general Council business will ordinarily be carried out via electronic means (for example via Boardpacks), by Council members present at the time. Voting will be one vote per person (except for the Chair where necessary – see paragraph 4). Voting will therefore ordinarily be by means of 'open' ballot. This means that whether a member has voted for / against or has abstained in any given motion will be collated following the meeting and such information held for a period of 28 days after the approval and publication of the minutes of Council meetings, after which period it will be destroyed. During the meeting, however, only the numbers voting will be disclosed. The Chair, at their discretion, may modify the Rules for voting / recording and provide for voting by an alternative means e.g. show of hands either in person or remotely / email confirmation, etc. This could apply, for example, in the event of malfunction of the electronic system and / or its non-availability.
7. For the purposes of elections to the offices of President, Vice-President, Treasurer and Chairs of standing committees, voting will be by secret electronic ballot. The Chair has no casting vote in relation to these elections. The Chair, at their discretion, may modify the Rules for voting / recording and provide for voting by an alternative means e.g. show of hands either in person or remotely / email confirmation, etc. This could apply, for example, in the event of malfunction of the electronic system and / or its non-availability.
8. Voting in the case of other committees, and sub-groups, should be by electronic means (for example via Boardpacks) or at the Chair's discretion a show of hands either in person or remotely / by email.

### **Remote participation in meetings**

9. Some or all of the members of Council, any committee, sub-committee or working party may take part in a meeting by means of video-conferencing as a standard method of participation. However, in exceptional circumstances, participants may attend via telephone conferencing, at the discretion of the person chairing the meeting. Such participants shall count as present for the purpose of any vote.

### **Minutes**

10. Minutes shall be taken of every meeting of the Council and of its committees and sub-committees.

### **Chairing of general meetings**

11. The President shall take the chair, but in the President's absence the chair shall be taken by whichever of the Vice-Presidents first took office as a Vice-President or President. If the President and the Vice-Presidents are not present the members present shall choose one of their number to take the chair.

### **Convening of Council meetings**

12. The meetings of the Council shall be convened by the Secretary or Registrar. At least ten days' notice shall be given of every Council meeting, unless the President directs that a shorter period is permissible.

### **Quorum for Council meetings**

13. The quorum of the Council shall be nine members present.

### **Business of Council meetings**

14. The agenda for a meeting shall state clearly the business to be transacted.
15. A Council member who wishes to raise any subject for discussion or move a motion at any Council meeting shall, as soon as possible after receipt of the notice of the meeting, and in any case not later than three days before the date of the meeting, give notice of it to the Secretary or Registrar. That subject or motion shall then be added to the agenda of the meeting; except that no motion which in the opinion of the person chairing the meeting is the same in substance as a motion previously rejected by the Council shall be moved within six months of the date of the meeting at which it was rejected, except with the agreement of the Council.
16. No business shall be transacted other than that stated on the agenda for the meeting, except with the leave of the Council as a matter of urgency.

### **Adjournment of Council meetings**

17. If no quorum is present within fifteen minutes of the time fixed for the commencement of a Council meeting, or the meeting ceases to be quorate during its course, it shall stand adjourned to a date and time to be fixed by the Chair, with the agreement of the members present.
18. Each meeting of the Council shall have power to adjourn to a future date and time, by agreement of the members present.

19. No business shall be transacted at an adjourned meeting other than that left unfinished at the adjournment of the immediately preceding session of the meeting, with the exception of urgent business designated as such by the President, and of which notice shall have been given to each Council member.

#### **Chairing of Council meetings**

20. The chair at Council meetings shall be taken by the President, but in the President's absence the chair shall be taken by whichever of the Vice-Presidents first took office as a Vice-President or President. If the President and the Vice-Presidents are not present, the members present shall choose one of their number to take the chair.

#### **Convening of committee meetings**

21. At least ten days' notice shall be given of every committee meeting, unless the Chair of the committee directs that a shorter period is permissible. The agenda for the meeting shall state clearly the business to be transacted.

#### **Quorum for committee meetings**

22. The quorum for a meeting of a committee shall be a majority of voting members of the committee, unless otherwise specified for any particular committee.

#### **Chairing of committee meetings**

23. The Chair of a committee shall take the chair at every meeting of a committee if present. If the Chair of the committee is not present, the Vice-Chair of the committee shall take the chair. If neither the Chair nor the Vice-Chair of the committee is present, the members present shall choose one of their number to take the chair.

#### **Rules of debate**

24. The rules of the debate shall be as follows, but subject to the discretion of the person chairing any meeting to regulate the proceedings as they think fit.
25. No motion shall be discussed before it has been seconded, and no member shall speak more than once to any motion, except with the leave of the Chair. The seconder of a motion may choose not to speak until later in the debate. The mover of the motion shall have the last word in the debate, but shall only answer points made by previous speakers and shall not introduce new material in the debate. No motion may be withdrawn, except by leave of the Chair. The withdrawal of a motion shall not preclude it from being moved on a later occasion.
26. All speeches shall be directed to the Chair. No speech shall last for more than five minutes, except with the leave of the Chair.
27. Amendments to motions must be relevant to the motion and within the scope of the motion. An amendment shall be for one of the following purposes:
  - to omit words;
  - to omit words and insert or add others in substitution;



- to insert or add words;
  - in the case of a meeting of the Council, that the subject-matter of the motion be referred to a committee.
28. No amendment shall be discussed before it has been seconded. Only one amendment may be discussed at any one time, unless the Chair considers that this will assist the meeting. If an amendment is carried, the motion as amended shall then become the substantive motion before the meeting, and may be further amended. The mover of an amendment shall have no right of reply to the debate on that amendment, but the mover of the original motion shall have the right of reply to the debate on the amendment. The seconder of an amendment may choose not to speak until a later stage in the debate on the amendment, but shall have no right of reply to the debate on the amendment.
29. A member who has not spoken in the debate may move the closure of the debate by moving either that the question be now put, or that the meeting do proceed to the next business.
30. A motion to close the debate must be seconded. Neither the proposer nor seconder of a closure motion shall speak to the closure motion and there shall be no debate on it. If a proposal that "the question be now put" is carried, the question before the meeting shall then be put to the meeting forthwith, save that the mover of the original motion shall have a right of reply to the debate before the question is put. If it is agreed to proceed to the next business the original debate shall be closed without any question being put.
31. A member may raise a point of order at any time during the meeting and shall be heard forthwith. A member wishing to raise a point of explanation in relation to a previous speech by that member in the debate shall raise it as a point of order. The ruling of the Chair on a point of order shall be conclusive and shall not be questioned in any way, except by way of substantive motion.

Approved by Council 9 July 2021

<b>Summary</b>	
Meeting	Council
Date	8 June 2023
Title	Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday, 8 June 2023 and remote decisions made 30 June – 4 July 2023.
Summary	Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday, 8 June 2023 and remote decisions made 30 June – 4 July 2023.
Decisions required	To approve the unclassified minutes and classified appendix.
Attachments	Classified appendix ( <b>confidential</b> ). Annex A – Retiring members' contributions
Author	Dawn Wiggins Secretary, Council 020 7202 0737 / <a href="mailto:d.wiggins@rcvs.org.uk">d.wiggins@rcvs.org.uk</a>

<b>Classifications</b>		
<b>Document</b>	<b>Classification<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Rationales<sup>2</sup></b>
Paper	Unclassified	n/a
Classified appendix	<b>Confidential</b>	<b>1, 2, 3, 4</b>
Annex A	Unclassified	n/a

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## Council

Hybrid meeting held on Thursday, 8 June 2023 at 10:00 am at the Royal College of Nursing, 20 Cavendish Square, London W1G 0RN

### Members:

Dr M A Donald (President in the Chair)	
Dr L H Allum	Professor S A May
Mrs B S Andrews-Jones	Mrs C-L McLaughlan
Miss L Belton	Professor T D H Parkin
*Professor D Bray	Dr S Paterson
Dr A L Calow	^Professor C J Proudman
Mr J M Castle	Mr M E Rendle
^Dr D S Chambers	^Dr K A Richards
Dr N T Connell	Mr T J Walker
Mrs O D R Cook	^Mr W A S Wilkinson
Dr J M Dyer	^Professor J L N Wood
Ms L Ford	^Ms J S M Worthington
^Dr M M S Gardiner	

\*Denotes absent

^Denotes remote attendees

### In attendance:

Miss H Alderton	Committee Liaison Officer (CLO)
Mr L Bishop	Media and Publications Manager (open session only)
Mrs J Dugmore	Director of Veterinary Nursing (DoVN)
Ms E C Ferguson	Registrar
Ms A Hanson	Media and Publications Officer (open session only)
Mr I A Holloway	Director of Communications (DoComms)
Ms B Jinks	Standards and Advisory Lead (open session only)
Ms G Kingswell	Head of Legal Services (Standards) (open session only)
Ms L Lockett	Chief Executive Officer (CEO)
Ms C McCann	Assistant Registrar / Director of Operations (DoO)
Dr C H Middlemiss	Chief Veterinary Officer (CVO) (UK) (Council Observer)
Mrs L Moffatt	Executive Assistant to CEO (open session only)
Mr B Myring	Policy and Public Affairs Manager (PPAM)
Mr A Quinn-Byrne	Governance Manager
Ms J Shardlow	Chair, Audit and Risk Committee (ARC)
Mr M Sundhu	Policy and Public Affairs Officer (PPAO)

### Guests (open session only)

Ms F Ahmed	Food Standards Agency (FSA) (AI 06a only)
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Dr J R Clark	Veterinary Director / Head of Profession, FSA (AI 06a only)
Ms R Clutterbuck	Head of AI Strategy & Veterinary Profession Policy Team, Defra (AI 06a only)
Ms V Cottrell	Policy & Public Affairs Manager, British Veterinary Association (BVA) (open session only)
Mr D Garfield	Chief Operating Officer, Eville & Jones (AI 06a only)
Mr P Imrie	<i>Veterinary Times</i> (open session only)
Mr J Johnson	Director of Operations, FSA (AI 06a only)
Dr M Jones	Head of Harper Keele Veterinary School, incoming RCVS Council member
Mr R Locker	Head of Field Operations, FSA (AI 06a only)
Mr J Loeb	<i>Veterinary Record</i> (open session only)
Ms E Miles	CEO, FSA (AI 06a only)
Dr N Sampson	Head of Veterinary Advisory Services, UK & International Affairs Directorate, FSA (AI 06a only)
Mr R Wyn Davis	Head of Assurance in Operations, FSA

## President's introduction

1. The President welcomed Council, staff and guests and outlined the order of the meeting.

## Apologies for absence

2. Apologies for absence had been received from Professor Bray.

## Declarations of interest

3. Declarations of interest were received from:
  - Mrs Andrews-Jones: commences a new role in September as Head of Nursing for Vets For Pets / Pets at Home group (new name Pets Group);
  - Dr Paterson: has been invited as a guest Lecturer at the Universities of Aberystwyth, and Central Lancashire.

## Minutes of the last meeting

4. Council had had the opportunity to comment electronically on the unclassified minutes and classified appendix of the meeting held on 16 March 2023. A vote was taken to approve the unclassified minutes and classified appendix:

For:	21
Against:	0
Abstain:	0
Did not vote:	2

- Dr Connell and Ms Worthington experienced technical difficulties and submitted email votes that were included in the figures. The unclassified minutes and classified appendix were accepted as a true record of the meeting by a majority vote.

## Matters arising

### Obituaries

- Council was informed of the following members that had died since the last meeting:

#### Alison Bruce

Mrs Bruce passed away on Sunday, 12 March 2023. She was a long-time supporter of the University of Glasgow Veterinary School and served on RCVS Council as a University of Glasgow representative from 2002 – 2011. She was a long-standing member of the RCVS Disciplinary Committee.

#### Peter Jinman

Mr Jinman was an elected member of Council 2005 – 2017, President of the RCVS 2010 – 2011 and past-President of the British Veterinary Association (BVA) and remained actively involved with the College as Chair of the Certification Subcommittee. For his tribute, please see link: [BVA and RCVS pay tribute to Herefordshire vet who served as President of both organisations - Professionals](#)

#### Austin Kirwan

Dr Kirwan was an elected member of Council 1999 – 2003, following that he came back on to the RCVS Disciplinary Committee in 2015, where he was a member until he died.

#### Carl Padgett

Former BVA and BCVA President, Mr Padgett graduated from the University of Glasgow Veterinary School in 1989 and was a partner at Bay Vets in Lancashire for many years.

#### Trevor Turner

Mr Turner set up his own practice in Northolt in the 1960s that went on to become Mandeville Veterinary Hospital and, alongside his wife, Jean, an RVN, did a huge amount for both the veterinary and veterinary nursing professions being fundamental in setting up the RANA training in the early days.

- Council, staff and guests stood and observed a minute silence for colleagues and all members of the veterinary professions that had passed since it last met.

### Council correspondence

8. The President reported the following items:

#### Annual General Meeting (AGM) 2023

9. The 2023 AGM would be held on Friday, 7 July 2023 commencing at 11:00 am at One Great George Street, Westminster. Invitations had been sent out by the Events Team and Council members were reminded to register their attendance via the Eventbrite link within the invitation.

#### RCVS Council Election 2023 and retiring members

10. Council had been informed of the outcome of the recent RCVS Council elections. Those members taking up their four-year terms at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) to be held on 7 July 2023 were Dr Alice McLeish and Mr Tim Hutchinson. Congratulations were given to the successful candidates, and to Miss Linda Belton on her re-election.
11. Council would sadly be saying goodbye at the AGM to Dr Niall Connell and Dr Joanna Dyer, neither of whom stood for re-election.
12. In the Veterinary Nurses Council election, successful candidates were Mr Simon Williams, and Mr Matthew Rendle who had been re-elected, congratulations were given to both.
13. Professor Proudman would be stepping down as a Veterinary Schools Council appointed member in July and would be replaced by Dr Matt Jones of Harper Keele Veterinary School.

#### Presidents' Reception

14. Postponed from March, this event would now take place on the eve of Royal College Day on Thursday, 6 July 2023. Invites had been sent by the Events Team, and Council members were reminded to register their attendance via the Eventbrite link provided. Members were further reminded that it was a social, non-compulsory, event so Loss of Earnings would not be payable. The President looked forward to seeing members at the event.

#### Committee membership 2023 – 2024

15. This would be finalised once the outcome of the election for Junior Vice-President was known and would be circulated by email once complete.

#### Meeting Dates

16. Meeting dates to the end of 2023 were listed in the Calendar and Contacts Booklet. Dates to the end of 2024 would be agreed *after* the paper before Council at its September meeting when the number of meetings and scheduling would be discussed.

#### CEO update

17. The CEO reported that it had been a busy period since the last Council meeting held in March, and drew Council's attention to:
  - representatives of the College had attended the British Small Animal Veterinary Association (BSAVA) Congress; the British Veterinary Association (BVA) Live event; and would be

heading to the Veterinary Management Group (VMG) Congress as soon as the meeting was closed;

- the new environmental and sustainability standards through the Practice Standards Scheme (PSS) had been welcomed;
- the joint RCVS and British Veterinary Chronic Illness Support (BVCIS) survey was nearing its deadline for submitting responses by Friday, 16 June 2023. This was looking at chronic, mental and physical illness and gathering people's experiences and working with other organisations to try and improve the cultural support for individuals;
- overseas networks were being built on: the CEO, Registrar, and Policy and Public Affairs Manager (PPAM) attended the recent International Veterinary Regulators Network (IVRN) meetings and Council on Licensure, Enforcement and Regulation (CLEAR) conference held in Dublin in May; IVRN was a group that tried to understand what other countries did from a regulatory perspective on an operational level; CLEAR was a global regulatory group. The Federation of Veterinarians of Europe (FVE) General Assembly was also being held the following week that would address a lot of different topics, not least around education;
- the College had been subject to the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) visitation this week; ENQA was an overarching body that accredited organisations that accredited educational programmes; a huge amount of work had gone into the visitation that included staff, Council members, stakeholders and colleagues from vet and VN schools, and thanks was given to all involved;
- there had been a good response to the call for applications to the new Public Advisory Group (PAG) with approximately 40 applications received; there were fewer large animal owners/keepers, and the majority were from small animal or equine owners;
- there was 18 months remaining on the current RCVS Strategic Plan; the general direction of travel would be discussed over coming months; values had been embedded into the organisation, these would continue as well as adding new things as they arose. It should be noted that a few lines on the Plan could represent months of work and the challenge remained around the resourcing of teams.

18. It was commented that it was great to see the engagement with the professions around practice standards, and that the first practice had been awarded for sustainability. Thanks were added for providing a comprehensive report and in particular the fact that the College was planning an educational space for school-age children in the new building – it was a fantastic initiative to have the ability to get the younger generation involved and to tell them about careers within the veterinary professions.

19. There were no further comments or questions, and the report was noted.



## Matters for decision by Council and for report (unclassified items)

### Temporary Registered Novice Official Veterinarian (TRNOV) Scheme

#### **Dr Richards declared an interest in that she was on the Board of Food Standards Scotland, and was a member and on Council of the Association of Government Vets (AGV)**

20. The Registrar introduced the paper and reminded Council that it related to a specific request for temporary registration for Official Veterinarians (OVs) providing meat hygiene controls in England and Wales that was first before Council in 2021. The Scheme was originally to be for 12 months' to cover an immediate, acute, veterinary resource need post-EU-exit in that particular sector; the whole Scheme being a departure from what would be normal registration rules for people coming on to the *RCVS Register of Members*. Eligibility for the Scheme required vets to have a contract of employment; a skilled-worker visa; an International English Language Testing System (IELTS) level 5 (or equivalent Occupational English Test (OET)); a degree from a European Association of Establishments for Veterinary Education (EAEVE) accredited veterinary school; and to have passed the OV training scheme. Whilst the Scheme was originally for 12 months, there was flexibility for individuals to be given a little longer – up to 18 months – to achieve IELTS level 7 language requirements that would put them onto the full Register. One of the key features was the supervision aspect of the TRNOV by an MRCVS.
  
21. In June 2022, the matter had come back to Council, at which point it was agreed to extend the operation of the Scheme for a further 12 months; the minutes of that meeting and the reviews undertaken by Standards Committee were included in the meeting bundle.
  
22. Upon review, it was noted that one change was to bring people on with IELTS level 6, on the basis that they were more likely to complete their level 7 with the timescale set; as well as a new approach to have Meat Hygiene Inspectors (MHIs) with level 5 that would undergo an intensive language programme.
  
23. The great need for personnel in place for public health was recognised. However, one of the ongoing concerns was the danger that what was a temporary scheme would become the 'new normal' as it was unique to that particular sector and therefore unavailable to other sectors that might also feel they had shortages. The Food Standards Agency (FSA) had always been clear that the Scheme remained a temporary solution, but that trying to find an exit strategy might take longer than originally envisaged and was now asking for a further extension.
  
24. Ms Miles, FSA CEO, emphasised how food standards relied on the integrity and professionalism of the members within the profession. Unfortunately, EU-exit and Covid-19 had had an impact on the capacity of OVs that had led to challenges for the FSA to deliver official controls. In order to address the immediate issue the FSA was facing, the request was for a three-year extension to the TRNOV Scheme. It was understandable that some Council members might be disappointed if it was felt that the FSA had not gone fast enough in forming its model, but it had encountered a lot of constraints on a practical, legislative, and economic level that had impacted on progress. Without an extension to the Scheme, within three to six months there would not be enough veterinary resource and approximately 20% of abattoirs would reduce, or cease, operations, which would directly impact food supply exports; public health; animal health and welfare; as well as the industry.

25. The FSA was committed to the temporary nature of the Scheme. It had worked with its Service Delivery Partner (SDP) who would only recruit vets with IELTS level 6 from July 2023; and there would be improvement to employment conditions, that would hopefully assist with retention. There had also been a plan for direct employment via the Government Veterinary Pathway, and much time had been spent preparing costing and practicalities of such a route, but two things had meant the FSA was unable to proceed with that pathway: the small budget allocated under its current spending settlement; and the practicality and complex nature of recruiting vets from abroad in order to provide a flexible service that could, instead, come from a SDP. Work on that route had therefore been paused and instead the SDP had started to put more emphasis on retention and career pathways that would also feature more in the contract when it came up for renewal. It was unknown if the direct employment pathway would be introduced once there was a new spending settlement from HM Treasury.
26. Dr Clark further emphasised the importance of MHIs in abattoirs and the FSA's statutory obligation to deliver on its standards. Work had been done to show reform and proposals to exit from the Scheme, aided by what had been learnt over the past two years on how temporary registered OVs progressed through the system. A three-year extension would provide stability whilst the MHI direct track approach was established and would allow further development work on medium- to long- term proposals as outlined in the paper. It was noted that 98% of OVs that had become full MsRCVS had had level 6 English language or above; the MHI track route was for those members who had graduated with a degree with EAEVE accreditation and between IELTS levels 5 and 6 English language who, in the past, would have been registered under Mutual Recognition of Professional Qualifications (MRPQ).
27. The details of the bar charts within the FSA proposal were outlined, in particular the model for 50% MHIs directly employed versus 50% supplied by the SDP. The action plan in a wider context was about addressing recruitment and retention of OVs and FSA vets in the short-term, to additionally encourage return to the profession in the medium-term and working closely with Defra and across the profession to address wider cultural challenges around the 'attractiveness' of the veterinary public health and OV roles in the long-term.
28. Mr Johnson provided Council with an update on the service delivery contract. The current SDP contract ran until March 2024; the FSA was in the process of developing a re-tender strategy and plan to maximise potential interest, some bidders had already been in contact before any bidding process had actually commenced. Work was ongoing with the Cabinet Office to understand how best to structure future contracts to increase attractiveness and the FSA was actively looking at opportunities to include service delivery alongside innovation partners following early engagement. Different operating models would be explored whilst recognising policy constraints; the recruitment pipeline and future supplies would ensure a sustainable supply of resources. Key focus would be on the delivery of contracts for any re-tender.
29. With regards impact, without temporary registration the industry would face significant challenges: you would expect c. seven OVs to leave monthly, equalling c. 40 over six months that would require prioritisation of abattoirs and the subsequent impacts to food supply, export and animal

health and welfare relationships within the industry as well as economic sustainability of the supply chain.

30. The CVO added her support to the longer period of extension to provide some stability and certainty to the meat industry and vets within that sector; she welcomed the detailed work done by the FSA, and that moving to IELTS level 6 had helped with retention but had not resolved the issue. However, retention was not just an FSA issue but a profession-wide one.

31. Comments and questions included, but were not limited to:

- thank you for the comprehensive reports. Whilst sympathetic to the challenges and constraints in terms of a permanent solution, at the moment there was insufficient reassurance from the information provided; a three-year extension was not temporary; there was a lack of credibility to the action plan in terms of progressive change to a permanent solution and, in particular, the ability to increase the number of MRCVS'. The College was facing a situation where it *had* to consider an extension, but there was also an overwhelming sense from the papers and comments made that the cost was too much of a driving factor as to why progress had not been made to date; that would get worse, not improve, over the next one or two years, so reassurance was sought as to why that would not be a reason for not progressing at the speed proposed in the papers;
- there were three issues: the temporary register was time-limited, three years was too long and overstretched that aspect; with regards retention, whilst on the Scheme there was a defined purpose for a specific need, if people coming onto the temporary register were not staying in the public health arena was that need ever going to be satisfied? Also, an EAEVE-accredited degree was a key criteria for the Scheme, Council reviewed EAEVE accreditation annually at its January meeting, and the TRNOV issue should be considered in parallel with that decision otherwise there was an inconsistency should the Scheme be extended but EAEVE accreditation not;
- the continued acceptance of accreditation, or people from accredited schools, was inconsistent with the RCVS' current accreditation standards; another issue was the retention of those on the Scheme, there was a huge difference between those leaving within three months to those leaving within five years, it would be useful to have more information about the specifics of retention rates;
- was there a time limit for someone to be on the temporary Register, and what was the difference between pre-EU-exit and post-EU-exit regarding MRPQ as it appeared it was entirely regarding the levels of English language;
  - o the specific rules for the TRNOV Scheme was within 18 months they had to pass IELTS level 7 English language, pre-EU-exit there was no English language requirement;
- paid Extra-Mural Studies (EMS) was a great idea, especially to encourage people into the public health type of work and this was going to be more important for the future;

- this matter had been discussed previously, but the College was pushed into a corner where it had to make a pragmatic decision to allow agriculture, trade, and farming to continue as smoothly as possible, given that its role was to maintain veterinary standards – had there been any explanation to the profession as to why such decisions were being made? Approving the suggested three-year extension at slightly lower English requirements did seem like a strange way of maintaining public health and animal welfare standards. Furthermore, part of the issue was that the FSA was not funded adequately enough; it was not unreasonable that the RCVS, in its role of maintaining public health, working with Standards Committee could highlight this to the Government and urge it to fund the FSA properly in order to address the issue instead of continually ‘fire-fighting’;
- clarification was needed regarding the critical issue of culture change and changing perceptions of veterinary public health work amongst students entering the profession – it sounded like it was being initiated by the FSA when ultimately it was the SDP doing the recruitment, understanding of the responsibilities and accountability for the culture change work and how it was being resourced was required;
- it was important to note that the extension related to graduates from EAEVE-accredited schools / degrees, not non-EAEVE-accredited. Regarding not triggering a contingency plan because of financial constraints, reassurance was required when the re-tendering exercise took place on the emphasis of exiting the Scheme;
- was there a population of individuals who wanted to take up the roles and what were the numbers of individuals that came in on temporary register? Was there a surplus or was it still a struggle to find individuals, even if it was maintained in that way?
- it was a tactical solution that did not address the strategic problem – the strategic problem stated in the paper was that between 2019 and 2021, the UK veterinary profession fell by 26%, how was the FSA proposing to address the strategic problem of ensuring there were more home-grown vets, given that government policy seemed to look at home-grown solutions rather than increasing migration?
- it was a difficult situation and it was unlikely that Council was unable to approve some sort of extension given the figures referred to; the issue was what the ‘check in’ points actually meant – it should be about the granularity of the progress being made and the milestones over the extension period, whether on an annual basis or more frequently. For example, it was [today] that Council as a whole learnt about the FSA decision to end the direct employment route; if Council was to approve any form of extension there had to be more clarity, transparency and openness about the progress being made so there were not annual, or tri-annual, decisions rolling it forward;
- there had been a lot of ‘sitting on hands’ with the Scheme as extensions kept being given, there needed to be a clear end date on when it was going to stop, a three-year extension was not compatible with that. There was a conflation of the shortage of OV’s with the shortage of vets within the UK – the rest of the veterinary profession did not have an issue with attracting UK graduates, the reason there was an issue in the OV sector was the deliberate strategy by

the SDP to recruit EU vets over many years that destroyed the UK culture of having vets go into public health roles; continuing the TRNOV Scheme allowed the SDP to continue with its business model. The update to Council suggested that, out of 500 responders, 70% would be interested in some sort of scheme to allow them to get involved with OV work alongside clinical work, which would improve the diversity of the clinical case load – even if members worked part time, and if training was made freely available to anyone that was interested, there was an opportunity to stop the gap; the TRNOV Scheme was not the only solution to the problem and it was concerning nothing else was being done to look for alternative solutions;

- modelling was referred to in the paper, and it was commented that there were already delivery providers interested in the tender process, was there capacity in the industry that was not currently being accessed? The modelling was delivered by the current SDP, had that been interrogated by anyone else?

### 32. The FSA and CVO responded:

- FSA confirmed it was not unsighted with regards the annual renewal of EAEVE accreditation and it was working very closely with Defra and the RCVS on the work around direct accreditation, but it had had to make some assumptions, EAEVE accreditation being one of them;
- regarding culture, there was an opportunity, not just in delivering official veterinary controls and abattoirs, but across the whole of veterinary public health to raise its profile and also the exciting possibilities of the differences that could be made working in One Health, however, this was not just something for the FSA but across government and across the profession for the rules and value of those areas of work, as well as its resourcing and financing. As civil servants, they were subject to civil service rules in terms of payments and increases; given the changes and continuing pressures that would likely be seen outwith and within government in terms of a target operating model, and jobs that would come up, it was likely that the finances and vet pay was going to continue to change. Defra would need to be able to respond to that within the flexibility it had within government, which it was working on and why it was developing a cross-government vet services pay frame; however, it took a lot of time as it meant working across departments to make it happen, and there was a cross-profession aspect that also needed to be worked on;
- regarding FSA funding, the way it worked was they received a three-year 'pot' that could not be changed once received. In 2022 there had been an unforeseen level of inflation that triggered pay pressures, and also additional work relating to EU-exit. Negotiations with the Treasury for a different arrangement would presumably fall in 2024, so there was a future opportunity;
- regarding the three-year period, Council had been thoughtful, strategic, and tactical about its comments. What was important were the checkpoints and being held to account for progress, however, if a three-year extension was not granted, the FSA would struggle to attract other companies to the bids because there would not be the certainty of the temporary arrangement and would feature as a massive risk; it also allowed for greater flexibility where

there could be the potential to use slightly different models on the domestic, British trained, veterinary front.

33. Council had a 10-minute break before continuing the discussion on the confidential aspects in closed session. This information is in the classified appendix at paragraphs 1 – 6.

34. Upon returning to open session, Council informed FSA guests of the following motion and decision:

A motion was put to Council to amend the decision before it and reduce the extension of the TRNOV Scheme from the requested three years, down to 18 months' duration, to align with the RCVS review of its decision around acceptance of EAEVE accreditation (with a recommendation that re-tendering for the SDP be completed before the end of that 18-month period):

Proposer: Ms L Ford  
Seconder: Dr K A Richards

35. A vote was taken:

For:	22
Against:	1
Abstain:	0

36. Experiencing technical difficulties, Dr Connell submitted an email vote, and Drs Gardiner and Richards submitted verbal votes, these were included in the figures. The amendment was approved by a majority vote.

37. FSA guests thanked Council for its time and consideration. It was noted that they would need to come back with a timeline for the re-tender process.

**FSA guests left the meeting.**

**RCVS Delegation Scheme 2023**

38. The CEO introduced the paper. Committees had been asked to discuss their individual Terms of Reference to ensure they were still fit for purpose; track changes reflected changes requested, and an addendum for Audit and Risk Committee would follow at the September meeting as there was an extra committee meeting scheduled in July. At the September Council meeting there would also be a further paper with a proposal about how often committees should meet and timing of meetings.

39. Comments included:

- it was suggested that paragraph 15 should include some guidance as there had been occasions where multiple emails had been exchanged before then deciding a meeting was required. However, it was accepted that a lot was dependent upon how the topic developed and guidance would be difficult given the huge range of likely situations;

- clarification was sought at paragraph 54 and it was confirmed the accreditation event report replaced the visitation reports for veterinary schools.

40. Council was asked to approve the recommended changes as set out in the paper. A vote was taken:

For:	23
Against:	0
Abstain:	0

41. Experiencing technical difficulties, Dr Connell submitted an email vote, and Dr Richards submitted a verbal vote, these were included in the figures. The recommendations were approved by unanimous vote.

### **Council Culture Working Group (CCWG) – amendments to Election Scheme and Code of Conduct for Council (and Committee) members**

42. Mr Walker introduced the paper. He highlighted the various ideas that had been discussed about how the Election Scheme might be improved, before it was decided that some relatively limited changes as set out would enable the requirements for information provided by candidates to be more flexible and would give the College better opportunities in the future to come up with a different model than what it currently had in the candidate biography and statement with fixed word limits.

43. Suggested changes were:

- a permanent change to the requirement for voting to be electronic rather than physical;
- declarations to make it clear about whether people had anything that might bring the College into disrepute;
- the Challenge Panel would move from a panel appointed from within Council, to members being independently appointed outwith Council and led by the Chair of Audit and Risk Committee;
- a single candidate nomination pack, rather than items from various web pages.

44. It was noted, however, that the Scheme was secondary legislation that was required to go through Defra and the Privy Council Office in order to make the changes, so it was unlikely it could be done in time for the nomination period for the 2024 elections, but that the candidate information pack could be implemented in time. It was hoped that this would make it easier for prospective candidates to understand the role of an RCVS Council member.

45. Amendments to the Code of Conduct for Council (and Committee) members included updated versions of the Nolan Principles – there was an error on the paper relating to the accountability principle and the words '*ensure this*' had been missed at then end. The two major changes were:

- reinforcement that individuals were not representatives of any particular constituency;
- clarification around confidentiality and the communication of confidential material.

46. Comments and questions included:

- how would papers / minutes of it items held in camera be declassified?
  - o the paper in question would go back to the (current) Chair for decision;
- what happened once a member had declared an interest? There was differing actions between a Council meeting, where you remained in the room and fully participated, to other work of the College and there should be greater clarity;
  - o there had been a lengthy discussion on this matter as currently it was down to the individual Chair; more work would be undertaken to ensure consistency and to produce a flow chart of how to manage declarations raised in a meeting;
- thank you for removing the visibility of a candidate's registered address;
- did paragraph 15 of the Election Scheme accidentally remove Standing Council members from being able to vote?
  - o no, they were eligible to vote, they just were not allowed to nominate a candidate;
- paragraph 4a of the general guidelines of the Code of Conduct for Council (and Committee) members should be reworded to read "*in the interest of the health and welfare of animals and in the wider public interest*" to match the College's 2015 Royal Charter and reflect that there might be times when animal health and welfare did not necessarily 'line up' with public interest and it was important to prioritise animal health and welfare;
  - o the wording was consistent with the corporate strategy, and it had already been accepted at the meeting [you] had taken part in.

47. Council was asked to approve, by formal resolution of Council, the amended Election Scheme Rules. A vote was taken:

For:	23
Against:	0
Abstain:	0

48. Experiencing technical difficulties, Dr Connell submitted an email vote, and Dr Richards submitted a verbal vote, these were included in the figures. The recommendations were approved by unanimous vote.



49. Council was asked to approve, per the recommendations from the CCWG, the amended Code of Conduct for Council (and Committee) members. A vote was taken:

For:	22
Against:	1
Abstain:	0

50. Experiencing technical difficulties, Dr Connell submitted an email vote, and Dr Richards submitted a verbal vote, these were included in the figures. The recommendations were approved by a majority vote.

## Reports of standing committees – to note

### **Advancement of the Professions Committee**

51. There were no comments or questions, and the report was noted.

### **Audit and Risk Committee**

52. There were no comments or questions, and the report was noted.

### **Education Committee**

53. There were no comments or questions, and the report was noted.

### **Finance and Resources Committee**

54. There were no comments or questions, and the report was noted.

### **Joint Audit and Risk / Finance and Resources Committee**

55. There were no comments or questions, and the report was noted.

### **Registration Committee**

56. There were no comments or questions, and the report was noted.

### **Standards Committee**

57. There were no comments or questions, and the report was noted.

### **Veterinary Nurses Council**

58. There were no comments or questions, and the report was noted.

### **Preliminary Investigation Committee / Disciplinary Committee Liaison Committee**

59. There were no comments or questions, and the report was noted.

60. It was commented that it was useful to be informed of key decisions made at committee level. The comment was noted.

## Reports of statutory committees – to note

### Preliminary Investigation Committee

61. There were no comments or questions, and the report was noted.

### RVN Preliminary Investigation Committee

62. There were no comments or questions, and the report was noted.

### Disciplinary Committee and RVN Disciplinary Committee

63. There were no comments or questions, and the report was noted.

## Notices of motion

64. There had been no notices of motion received.

## Questions

65. There had been no questions received.

## Election of Vice-President (Junior) – recommendation for confirmation at the AGM on 7 July 2023

66. The President reported that there had been two nominations received:

Candidate:	Dr L H Allum	Miss L S Belton
Supporters:	Mrs B S Andrews-Jones Dr D S Chambers Dr M M S Gardiner Mrs C-L McLaughlan	Dr A L Calow Mr M E Rendle Dr K A Richards Mr T J Walker
Date of first joining Council:	July 2021 (Elected)	July 2019 (Elected)
Current term due to end:	July 2025	July 2027

67. Miss Belton had also circulated a letter to Council.

68. It was confirmed that members physically present would use ballot papers that had been tabled, and members joining the meeting remotely would email the Registrar with their vote to maintain confidentiality.

69. The candidates voted and left the room.

70. Council was asked if it wished to have a confidential discussion, which was declined. The Registrar and Director of Operations (DoO) briefly left the room to count the ballot papers and note email responses from remote attendees.
71. The candidates returned to the room and Miss Belton was congratulated on her successful election as Vice-President (Junior) subject to confirmation at the AGM.
72. It was commented that it was great to have two strong candidates and that, whoever was unsuccessful, should be encouraged to put their names forward again.

### Any other College business (unclassified items)

#### Under Care / Artificial Intelligence (AI)

73. It was commented that Council's decision to change the definition of Under Care arose from the need to explore how new technologies were to be regulated. In the last few weeks in the news there had been a lot of discussion of very new technology that was also AI that had the capacity to affect the College – was the College looking at how AI could be regulated generally? More specifically, the decoupling of physical 'hands on' care of animals from their medical treatment that was being allowed from 1 September 2023, could it, in the shortcut for AI to prescribe directly to veterinary patients, 'leapfrog' over the College's current regulatory processes? Had this been considered, and mitigations developed?
74. The CEO confirmed that the College was in the process of putting together a workshop-style day (date to be confirmed) to consider not just ChatGPT (a Generative Pretrained Transformer series of language models) and AI, but broadly the variables of technology and the potential needed from a regulatory perspective alongside opportunities for the College in how it might be harnessed.

#### Retiring member: Dr Connell (10 years' service 2013 – 2023)

75. As Dr Connell was unable to attend the forthcoming Royal College Day due to another commitment, Council took the opportunity to thank him for his hard work for the College, and Council, over the last 10 years. A long list of contributions included but were not limited to being President in 2019 – 2020 during the unprecedented year at the start of Covid, and Treasurer 2021 – 2023.
76. On behalf of Council, the President presented Dr Connell with a scroll and gift. Dr Connell thanked the President and stated that it had been an absolute privilege to work with RCVS staff and Council and wished everyone the best for the future.
77. The President confirmed that Dr Dyer and Professor Proudman would be formally thanked at Royal College Day in July. The contributions of all retiring members would be annexed to the minutes (see **Annex A**).

### **Thanks to President, Dr M A Donald**

78. On behalf of Council, the Junior Vice-President thanked the President for her guidance and fantastic year in the role.

### **Risk Register, equality and diversity (unclassified items)**

79. The following item was identified as needing inclusion on the Corporate Risk Register:

- Artificial intelligence and remote prescribing.

### **Date of next meeting**

80. The date of the next meeting will be Thursday, 7 September 2023 commencing at 10:30 am, to be held at Harper Adams University, Newport, Shropshire.

### **Matters for decision by Council and for report (confidential items)**

#### **Estates Strategy – update**

81. This information is available in the classified appendix at paragraphs 7 – 16.

#### **2022 Draft Annual Report and Financial Statements**

82. This information is available in the classified appendix at paragraphs 17 – 24.

#### **Registration and retention fees 2024 – 2025**

83. This information is available in the classified appendix at paragraphs 25 – 29.

#### **Practice Standards Scheme Rules – amendments**

84. This information is available in the classified appendix at paragraphs 30 – 42.

#### **RCVS Honours and Awards**

85. This information is available in the classified appendix at paragraphs 43 – 49.

### **Any other College business (confidential items)**

#### **Classified appendices from Council or committee meetings**

86. There were no comments raised on the classified appendices as noted at paragraph 50.

#### **Other items to report**

87. This information is available in the classified appendix at paragraphs 51 – 52.

**Veterinary Surgeons Act – legislative reform / governance (confidential item)**

88. This information is available in the classified appendix at paragraphs 53 – 66.

**Risk Register, equality and diversity (confidential items) taken out of order of the agenda**

89. This information is available in the classified appendix at paragraph 67.

**Reflective session (confidential item)**

90. This information is available in the classified appendix at paragraphs 68 – 69.

91. The President brought the meeting to a close.

**Remote decisions made 30 June – 4 July 2023 (Confidential items)**

**External recruitment (private / confidential)**

92. This information is available in the classified appendix at paragraphs 70 – 77.

**Committee membership and other roles (confidential)**

93. This information is available in the classified appendix at paragraph 78.

## Annex A

**Retiring members at RCVS Day – main contributions** (membership is not exhaustive as some Boards/Working Groups were not added to the main committee lists.)

### **Dr Niall Connell: elected 2013– 2023 (10 years)**

- President 2019 – 2020
- Treasurer: 2021 – 2023
  
- Chair, Finance and Resources Committee
- Chair, Specialist Recognition and Advanced Practitioner Appeals Committee
- Vice-Chair Veterinary Nurses Council
- Advancement of the Professions Committee (latterly as Observer)
- Audit and Risk Committee (latterly as Observer)
- Education Committee (latterly as Observer)
- Nominations Committee
- Preliminary Investigation Committee and Disciplinary Committee Liaison Committee
- Registration Committee
- Standards Committee (Observer)
- Chair, Register and Registration Subcommittee
- Chair, Diversity and Inclusion Group
- Vice-Chair, Fellowship Board
- Brexit Taskforce
- Covid-19 Taskforce
- Environment and Sustainability Working Party
- Estates Strategy Group
- Hardwick Street Refurbishment Group
- IT Project Board
- Operational Board / Officer Team
- RCVS Knowledge Board of Trustees (Observer)
- Vet Futures Project Board

### **Dr Joanna Dyer: elected 2015 – 2023 (eight years)**

- Advancement of the Professions Committee
- Education Committee (Observer)
- Registration Appeals Committee
- Standards Committee
- Veterinary Nurses Council
- Chair, Primary Qualifications Subcommittee
- Chair, Extra-Mural Studies Co-ordinators Liaison Group
- RCVS Knowledge Board of Trustees

**Professor Christopher Proudman: University (Surrey) appointed March – July 2020 (five months) / Veterinary Schools Council appointee 2021 – 2023 (two years)**

- Education Committee
- Registration Committee
- Certification and Advanced Veterinary Practice Subcommittee
- Recognised Veterinary Practice Subcommittee

<b>Summary</b>	
Meeting	Council
Date	7 July 2023
Title	7 July 2023 Council minutes
Summary	Minutes of the meeting held on Friday, 7 July 2023 (AGM).
Decisions required	To approve the unclassified minutes.
Attachments	None
Author	Dawn Wiggins Secretary, Council 0207 202 0737 / <a href="mailto:d.wiggins@rcvs.org.uk">d.wiggins@rcvs.org.uk</a>

<b>Classifications</b>		
<b>Document</b>	<b>Classification<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Rationales<sup>2</sup></b>
Paper	Unclassified	n/a



**<sup>1</sup>Classifications explained**

Unclassified	Papers will be published on the internet and recipients may share them and discuss them freely with anyone. This may include papers marked 'Draft'.
Confidential	Temporarily available only to Council Members, non-Council members of the relevant committee, sub-committee, working party or Board and not for dissemination outside that group unless and until the relevant committee or Council has given approval for public discussion, consultation or publication.
Private	The paper includes personal data which should not be disclosed at any time or for any reason, unless the data subject has agreed otherwise. The Chair may, however, indicate after discussion that there are general issues which can be disclosed, for example in reports to committees and Council.

**<sup>2</sup>Classification rationales**

Confidential	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To allow the Committee or Council to come to a view itself, before presenting to and/or consulting with others</li> <li>2. To maintain the confidence of another organisation</li> <li>3. To protect commercially sensitive information</li> <li>4. To maintain public confidence in and/or uphold the reputation of the veterinary professions and/or the RCVS</li> </ol>
Private	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. To protect information which may contain personal data, special category data, and/or criminal offence data, as listed under the General Data Protection Regulation</li> </ol>

## Council Meeting

Minutes of the meeting held on Friday, 7 July 2023 at One Great George Street,  
Westminster, London SW1P 3AA

### Members:

Dr M A Donald (in the Chair)

\*Dr L H Allum

Mrs B S Andrews-Jones

\*Miss L Belton

Professor D Bray

Dr A L Calow

Mr J M Castle

Dr D S Chambers

Mrs O D R Cook

Ms L Ford

Dr M M S Gardiner

Mrs S D Howarth

Mr T M Hutchinson

Dr M D Jones

Professor S A May

Mrs C-L McLaughlan

Dr A J McLeish

\*Professor T D H Parkin

Dr S Paterson

Dr K A Richards

Mr T J Walker

\*Mr W A S Wilkinson

Professor J L N Wood

\*Ms J S M Worthington

\*Denotes absent

### In attendance:

Ms E C Ferguson

Registrar

Ms L Lockett

CEO

Ms C L McCann

Director of Operations (DoO)

Ms J Shardlow

Chair, Audit and Risk Committee

### Apologies for absence

1. Apologies of absence were received from:

- Dr L H Allum
- Miss L S Belton
- Dr C H Middlemiss (Observer)
- Professor T D H Parkin
- Mr W A S Wilkinson
- Ms J S M Worthington

## Declarations of interest

2. There were no new declarations of interest received.

## Matter for decision by Council

### Appointment of the Presidential Team and Treasurer 2023 / 2024

3. Council was asked to approve the appointment of the new Presidential Team and Treasurer for 2023 / 2024 as follows:

President:	Dr S Paterson
Vice-President (Senior):	Dr M A Donald
Vice-President (Junior):	Miss L S Belton
Treasurer:	Dr M M S Gardiner

4. The Presidential Team and Treasurer appointments for 2023 / 2024 were approved.

## Correspondence and matters for note

5. There was no correspondence nor matters for note to report.

## Date of next meeting

6. The date of the next Council meeting was confirmed as Thursday, 7 September 2023 commencing at 10:00 am to be held at Harper Adams University, Newport, Shropshire TF10 8NB.

**[Afternote: start time for September meeting now 10:30 am to allow time for a series of meetings whilst in Newport.]**

<b>Summary</b>	
Meeting	RCVS Council
Date	7 September 2023
Title	CEO update, including progress against Strategic Plan
Summary	This paper offers a summary of activity against the 2020-2024 Strategic Plan
Decisions required	To note
Attachments	None
Author	Lizzie Lockett CEO l.lockett@rcvs.org.uk

<b>Classifications</b>		
<b>Document</b>	<b>Classification</b>	<b>Rationales</b>
Paper	Unclassified	n/a

## Background

1. The RCVS Strategic Plan 2020-2024 was approved at the RCVS Council meeting in January 2020 and came into immediate effect. The full report, including all of the narrative, together with case studies from the previous plan's successes, can be found here:  
<https://www.rcvs.org.uk/news-and-views/publications/rcvs-strategic-plan-2020-2024/>
2. At its meeting in July 2020, the Officer Team felt it appropriate that an update be given to Council three times a year – in September, January and June – and information about a specific action can be made available to any Council member on request in between times.
3. For each action, responsibilities, recent activities and next steps have been identified in the following table, alongside a Red/Amber/Green (RAG) rating, to show progress compared to what was anticipated at this point in the Strategic Plan's implementation.
4. Outside of those changes noted in the Strategic Plan table to follow, since the 8 June 2023 Council meeting, we have also:
  - a. Published our annual report and accounts
  - b. Held two webinars on our new under care guidance, along with case studies and FAQ
  - c. Opened booking for our Mind Matters Mental Health Research Symposium (10 October)
  - d. Launched a new course on RCVS Academy to support veterinary professionals in complaints handling, and celebrated the Academy's first birthday and 10,000-enrolment milestone
  - e. Hosted RCVS Day, our annual general meeting and awards event, including the inauguration of the new Presidential team
  - f. Awarded our Mind Matters Sarah Brown research grant to a project exploring student veterinary nurse mental health education
  - g. Paid tribute to former Registrar, Alastair Porter, who sadly passed away in July
  - h. Admitted 34 new Fellows and announced Dame Sally Davies as speaker for the 27 November Fellowship Day
  - i. Provided advanced warning to VNs about the forthcoming renewal process
  - j. Launched our Charter Case Committee

## A: Clarity

**Ambition:** to ensure that we have clarity of purpose and that our internal and external stakeholders and service-users understand our role in the world. We will endeavour to become a proactive regulator that remains a step ahead, even in the face of constant change and uncertainty. We will listen widely, consult meaningfully, make confident decisions, then communicate with clarity, appreciating that the final outcome may not suit everyone.

Action	Who?	Status	Recent activity/next steps
1. Continue, via the work of the Veterinary Legislation Working Party (LWP) and other groups, to review the regulatory landscape to ensure we develop world-leading, robust standards and approaches that are grounded in evidence and risk-based, in order to safeguard animal health and welfare, and public health, and maintain trust in the veterinary professions.	Exec Office/ Ed/VN		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Successful event to promote the need for new legislation at the House of Lords in October 2022 and parliamentary drop-in session in April 2023. New microsites built to support the argument – which have been shortlisted for an award. Two educational webinars took place during May with RCVS and VN Council members, and representatives of BVA and the British Veterinary Nursing Association (BVNA). Defra supportive, progress now depends on available time.</li> <li>• First accreditations using the new educational standards and methodology were completed in Liverpool (March 2023), and Aberystwyth / RVC (May 2023). Launched a comprehensive new online training programme for accreditation panel members via RCVS Academy, with positive initial feedback. Panel member feedback following new accreditation processes also positive.</li> <li>• The evidence-base informing the new accreditation standards for vet degrees has been published in the <i>Journal of Veterinary Medical Education</i>.</li> <li>• Following VN support meetings, there have been three successful accreditations.</li> </ul>
2. Ensure that we are addressing what matters to our stakeholders and that we horizon-scan for issues that are beyond the scope of our immediate view. For example, regulation of new technologies, regulation of practices, review of our concerns and disciplinary process, and regulation of the wider veterinary team and the environment in which they work.	APC/ LWP/ PICDCL /EC		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regulation of the wider vet team is linked to new legislation. We continue to investigate the most appropriate groups to bring under any future regulatory umbrella, for example, the first behavioural medicine roundtable was hosted by the Fellowship Science Advisory Panel in May. This was a useful initial discussion and precursor to the establishment of a FSAP working party to investigate whether and how animal behavioural medicine should be regulated. Membership of the working party has now been selected, chaired by Professor Anna Meredith, and planning is underway for the first meeting.</li> <li>• The new concerns process has been launched. and website has been updated.</li> <li>• The new Charter Case Committee members have been trained, and also PIC members. The CCC was launched on 25 August.</li> <li>• New plans for Extra Mural Studies (EMS) published and communicated.</li> <li>• Report of Clinical Careers Pathway stakeholder published.</li> <li>• New Under Care/Out-of-Hours guidance came into force on 1 September 2023. Webinars have been held and case studies and FAQs produced.</li> <li>• New guidance on canine AI published.</li> <li>• A discussion paper on the longer-term future of veterinary education is going to Education Committee in September.</li> </ul>

Action	Who?	Status	Recent activity/next steps
<p>3. Review whether we can take a more proactive role around breaches of the Veterinary Surgeons Act involving unqualified individuals, or courses that purport to lead to registration but do not, both through education to end-users of veterinary services, and working more actively to support those wishing to raise concerns with the relevant authorities.</p>	<p>Registrar</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Following approval at the March 2023 meeting of Council, the 12-month trial of a protocol for the private prosecution of breaches of the Veterinary Surgeons Act was launched on 1 April.</li> </ul>
<p>4. Work with our partners overseas to ensure that the UK remains relevant in the veterinary world post-EU exit, including sharing knowledge, marketing our standards and services, and building an engaged diaspora of members of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (MsRCVS) and registered veterinary nurses (RVNs). Ensure there is a global element to all that we do, and that our international members feel engaged and included.</p>	<p>APC/ FVE/ EC</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue improving engagement with overseas members.</li> <li>Work ongoing to develop more permanent solution to loss of mutual recognition of professional qualifications – paper with Defra but no response has been received.</li> <li>First consultative accreditation visit to an EU school under our 2023 accreditation standards took place in May.</li> <li>Continuing strong relations with International Accreditors Working Group, Federation of Veterinarians of Europe, Mind Matters International and International Veterinary Regulators Network (attended IVRN meeting in Dublin in May and also presented at CLEAR international regulatory conference on compassionate regulation). Attended useful meeting of IAWG in Melbourne in July. RCVS presented a proposal for adopting a more environmentally sustainable approach to joint international accreditations involving visitors trained in the standards and processes of more than one agency. Previously there has been resistance, but this proposal was received positively and all IAWG members have agreed to take it to their decision-making committees. Subject to agreement, RCVS proposing to pilot this with a partner IAWG agency.</li> <li>President and CEO were guests at AVMA Congress in July and continue to build strong networks with our US colleagues.</li> <li>Involved in ESNO (for European specialist nurses) discussions on workforce shortages and retention, culminating in a report to the European Commission.</li> <li>Involved in the review and revision of the Accreditation Committee of Veterinary Nurse Education (ACOVENE) Standards.</li> <li>Academy course developed for overseas vets / VNs applying to register launched.</li> <li>There are opportunities to promote and 'sell' some of our initiatives overseas, but UK work takes priority during this busy time.</li> <li>CEO joined FVE taskforce on development of European Veterinary Foundation.</li> </ul>

Action	Who?	Status	Recent activity/next steps
5. Build a closer relationship between the College, the professions and the public by continuing our outreach programme. Review how we gain input from stakeholders at all levels, including the development of an improved process for seeking input from members of the public.	APC/ Comms/ Exec		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recruitment for Public Advisory Group completed and first meeting due 22 September; first piece of work on advice for animal owners on the website.</li> <li>Programme of attendance at events and congresses for 2023 ongoing.</li> <li>Survey planned to evaluate effectiveness of RCVS coms and engagement activities, and review vet/VN preferences, to inform new comms strategy.</li> <li>New iteration of Council Culture Working Group continues to recommend how relationship between Council and professions can be improved.</li> <li>Chronic Illness and Disability Survey for vets, nurses, student vets and SVNs gained over 3,000 responses. Data being analysed and will be published in autumn. It will be used to inform our own EDI activities and as an opportunity to provide landmark statistics and insight to the veterinary professions.</li> </ul>
6. Establish clarity around a data-sharing commitment, and ensure that our views, our data & our insights are shared regularly in an easy-to-search way, for example, easy-to-find FAQ on key issues, insights gained from concerns & complaints data, and self-service facts and figures about the professions. Make available accessible & anonymised versions of the data we hold to all stakeholders to enable them to generate value and insights for the sector.	FRC/ Digital/ Policy		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop dashboard on key metrics - part of KPI project (see later).</li> <li>Data management system (CRM) review under consideration by a project board reporting to Finance and Resources Committee.</li> <li>Additional data being gathered about reasons for leaving the RCVS Registers – reported to Registration Committee.</li> <li>More work needs to be done on the self-service data aspect.</li> <li>Development of Surveys of the Professions questionnaires for 2024 underway – stakeholder views being sought.</li> </ul>
7. Plan and implement a cycle of review and improvement for our educational standards and processes, to ensure we continue to take a leadership role with our international partners.	Ed Cttee/ VN Ed Cttee		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RCVS Academy for accreditation panellists launched, initial feedback positive.</li> <li>First accreditation events under new standards have been completed successfully in March 2023 (Liverpool) and April (Aber/RVC). Evaluation being analysed to inform quality improvement to our processes.</li> <li>Review of AP / Specialist status ongoing – clinical careers event 7 December 2022, and report now published. Initial framework for clinical career pathways agreed at EC in May – allowing project planning and development.</li> <li>Following VN support meetings, eight successful accreditation events.</li> <li>ENQA re-accreditation w/c 5 June; completed factual accuracy check of the report early August. Outcome due September/October.</li> <li>VN Standards Framework for Veterinary Nurse Education and Training review due to commence autumn 2023.</li> </ul>
8. Ensure clarity of appeal across all the areas where we make decisions, modernising where appropriate; where appeal is unavailable, clearly justify.	Legal services		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Registration appeals process to be considered now MRPQ no longer exists.</li> <li>Appeal process for Statutory Membership Examination to be considered.</li> <li>Review and revise VN accreditation appeals process.</li> </ul>



## B: Compassion

**Ambition:** to be a compassionate upstream regulator and a supportive Royal College by ensuring that high standards continue to be met while working in an empathetic way that respects all of our stakeholders and service-users as individuals. We will recognise that a compassionate approach involves helping members of the veterinary team build the skills and knowledge they need to meet our standards, which is ultimately in the interests of animal health and welfare.

Action	Who?	Status	Recent activity/next steps
1. Endeavour to ensure that the College is seen as approachable, helpful, fair and accessible to all.	All		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Full web content review is underway, with consideration being given to information accuracy, content design, language style, accessibility, diversity and inclusion and search engine optimisation (SEO).</li> <li>• See also A5 above ref engagement.</li> <li>• Review of appeals processes ongoing, see A8 above.</li> <li>• Improving the way we communicate Council and committee activities as part of the Council Culture project.</li> <li>• Continue with VN support package, see A7 above.</li> <li>• Have supported refugees through the Statutory Membership Examination process and the first one has now passed and will register with us.</li> </ul>
2. Enable our teams to deliver compassionate regulation by providing structures, training and support to ensure they can help vets and nurses meet the standards required in a compassionate way, and take ownership and communicate clearly when things don't go to plan. Recognising that, in order to achieve this, our team members must also feel well supported and that they are compassionately treated.	People		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Peakon data regularly reviewed.</li> <li>• New Staff Network Group set up (to bring together previous LGBTQ+, wellbeing and EDI groups).</li> <li>• New staff training priorities fall out of 'My Progress' annual reviews; this now has greater focus on values. What it takes to become a 'learning organisation' was discussed at June's staff away day and initiatives being planned.</li> <li>• New online learning hub for staff under development (aligned with RCVS Academy), and new intranet.</li> <li>• Thematic review of data from exit interviews now going to Senior Team.</li> <li>• Review of EAP and other support will take place shortly. Monthly tips and advice shared on Loo News (weekly staff news-sheet).</li> <li>• Dedicated Talent resource appointed, full review of career website and assessment material due to take place.</li> <li>• Growth mindset group in place to encourage different ways of thinking.</li> <li>• Review of benefits underway, will take account of needs of home-workers.</li> <li>• Succession planning conversations taken place with ST.</li> <li>• Career progression framework under review to provide clarity of movement across the organisation.</li> <li>• Training support policy near completion to provide greater clarity on learning outcomes where financial support is provided.</li> </ul>

Action	Who?	Status	Recent activity/next steps
3. Review our concerns process through the eyes of each of our stakeholder and service-user groups to ensure that it is fair, forward-thinking and compassionate, and set out a programme of quality improvement.	ProfCon MMI		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promotion of ProfCon Investigation Support Service; article May RCVS News.</li> <li>Registrar took part in 'myth-busting' panel ref complaints at BVA Live.</li> <li>Public Advisory Group will support us developing more compassionate approach for animal owners.</li> <li>Academy courses on resolving complaints in practice, and Complaints: communication, confidence and compassion now available.</li> </ul>
4. Help our regulated professionals to meet the standards expected of them by their peers, the public and society at large by launching the RCVS Academy, which will house a range of online educational tools to help veterinary surgeons, veterinary nurses and other potential associates of the College understand what is expected of them in terms of meeting standards, and to support them acquiring relevant knowledge and staying up to date in a creative, accessible and inspiring way.	Exec ALL		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New Academy courses being launched regularly, recently including working in the UK and a course for newly-registered veterinary nurses.</li> <li>10,000 learners now signed up.</li> <li>Regular contact with advisory panel of vets and nurses ensures content is relevant.</li> <li>Regular review of content based on dashboard of metrics and suggestions from learners.</li> <li>Sessions planned at congresses (eg SPVS and BVNA) to promote and engage.</li> <li>Apprentice being recruited to the Academy team.</li> </ul>
5. Continue to support the mental health and wellbeing of members of the veterinary team, and our College staff, through the Mind Matters Initiative under its workstreams of 'prevent, protect and support' (see <a href="http://www.vetmindmatters.org">www.vetmindmatters.org</a> ), and also help veterinary professionals to take account of the mental health of those with whom they come into contact.	APC		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MMI Strategy and Evaluation documents published.</li> <li>Collaboration with BSAVA for 2024 Congress content underway</li> <li>Sarah Brown Mental Health Research Grant awarded, and this will be the first piece of research dedicated to Vet Nurses</li> <li>MMI Mental Health Research Symposium tickets on sale, this is the first in-person MMI Symposium since Covid. Being held on World Mental Health Day (10 October) in Manchester.</li> <li>MM International research event under discussion as possibility.</li> </ul>
6. Continue to foster a reflective learning culture amongst members of the veterinary team, so that they can continue to grow and develop in a supportive, no-blame environment.	APC Ed Cttee		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reflective CPD and use of 1CPD app now mandatory – communications and promotion have taken place and will continue.</li> <li>Evaluation of VetGDP Adviser e-learning highly positive.</li> <li>Discussions remain ongoing with NHS regarding relaunch of Edward Jenner Leadership MOOC.</li> </ul>

## C: Courage

**Ambition:** we will have the courage to take a leadership role within the professions, to ensure that the pervading culture is healthy, sustainable, inclusive, innovative and respectful; through this, will develop confident veterinary professionals.

Action	Who?	Status	Recent activity/next steps
1. Continue to seek culture change within the wider professions around help-seeking behaviour to support both mental and physical health, learning culture, leadership, innovation, sustainability and diversity.	DIG MMI APC Education		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• See B5 for MMI and B6 for learning culture.</li> <li>• VN version of religious clothing document under development.</li> <li>• Fellowship Science Advisory Panel project on Net Zero practice moving forward with Chairs appointed to the Medicine WG and the Surgery WG.</li> <li>• Sustainability is a key aspect of Hardwick Street refurbishment project.</li> <li>• Co-signatory for Zero Hour UK letter to Dept of Health and Social Care on zero-carbon healthcare.</li> <li>• ViVet strategy under review at present.</li> <li>• Paper on learning culture in VetGDP published in <i>Journal of Veterinary Medical Education</i>.</li> <li>• Poster presentation on BAME Recommendations and Religious Clothing Guidance at July Association for the Study of Medical Education EDI event.</li> <li>• VetGDP for returners now launched to help people to return to veterinary work following a career break.</li> <li>• Chronic illness survey has now been completed and is currently being analysed by our research partners (more detail above).</li> <li>• 'RVN – Starting Out' course, designed to support the transition from student to registered nurse, launched May 2023.</li> <li>• Course under development to support those returning after a career break.</li> <li>• Menopause tool kit launched as part of VN Futures (VNF).</li> <li>• Flexible working tool kit being developed as part of VNF.</li> <li>• Work has started on a new Academy course, open to all, on Unconscious Bias, and also one specifically for Fellowship Assessors.</li> </ul>
2. Celebrate the art as well as the science of veterinary medicine and ensure that wider professional skills are properly and credibly supported.	APC RCVSK Education		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improvements to honours and awards process agreed at June Council.</li> <li>• New building will focus on history and future of veterinary practice.</li> <li>• Education space for school-age children planned for new building to encourage better understanding of veterinary profession from a younger age and potentially encourage applications to vet school from a wider pool.</li> <li>• The introduction of the new Fellowship categories has brought in a wider diversity of Fellows, whose expertise on the art and science of veterinary medicine needs to be harnessed. Wider skills continue to be championed through the CertAVP and the new vet school standards.</li> </ul>

Action	Who?	Status	Recent activity/next steps
3. Work with other stakeholders to retain skills and talent within the professions, by developing return-to-work options that build confidence in those who have had a career break, for whatever reason.	<i>Education MMI ViVet Academy Exec</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publication of Workforce Action Plan outlines range of actions to be taken under this heading. A series of webinars with the wider profession have now taken place – see A2.</li> <li>• DIG is due to focus next on an inclusive recruitment toolkit to support organisations to consider their recruitment process from job description thorough to induction, which should impact on recruitment and retention.</li> <li>• VetGDP is available for those returning to the profession. Compulsory for those away from the profession for more than five years, optional for those away for a shorter period. Now covered in VetGDP coms.</li> <li>• Work ongoing to understand recruitment, retention and return activities within the government / public health veterinary sector and develop an action plan based on gap analysis.</li> <li>• Nurse Return course available for all nurses returning to the Register. Compulsory for those who have been off the register for five years or more.</li> </ul>
4. Ensure a pathway for career progression for vets and nurses via postgraduate/post-qualification accreditations and qualifications – to meet the needs of vets and nurses at all stages of their careers.	<i>Education VN</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fifth provider of CertAVN approved.</li> <li>• Clinical career pathways report has been published.</li> <li>• Framework for future clinical career pathways approved by Education Committee. Detailed project plans to be discussed at EC in Sept.</li> <li>• VN career progression linked to LWP proposals (see A1).</li> <li>• Proposals under development for the Advanced Practitioner role for veterinary nurses.</li> <li>• VN Prescriber survey to be launched.</li> <li>• Actions within Workforce Action Plan also consider fulfilling careers.</li> </ul>
5. Develop extra-mural studies (EMS) and work experience opportunities at the College, together with more opportunities for veterinary professionals and members of the public to become engaged with the work of the regulator at first hand and gain an understanding of its complexities.	<i>Comms APC</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop modules for Academy to better explain our key functions.</li> <li>• Recruitment for next round of EMS placements, jointly with Veterinary Policy Research Foundation, ongoing.</li> <li>• Officers will attend a range of freshers' weeks and careers fairs at the vet schools in autumn 2023.</li> <li>• Plan for attending VN schools' induction weeks underway for autumn 2023.</li> <li>• CEO undertaking talks with practices - including those on new grad schemes – to demystify the work of the College.</li> <li>• RVNs working at the College were recently profiled as part of VN Awareness Month; an RVN group has been set up to support the professional identity of RVNs working at the College and part of this will be showcasing the work of the College and the opportunities to be had.</li> </ul>

Action	Who?	Status	Recent activity/next steps
6. Create an innovation funding pot to enable the professions to help solve regulation and professional standards issues that matter to them.	Exec FRC		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Launch bursary scheme – needs name!</li> <li>• Consideration of challenge prize on hold due to other priorities. It will also be important to ensure the professions have the right skills and approach to innovation in order to maximise the opportunity.</li> </ul>
7. Continue to develop the Fellowship into a learned society that reflects the varied achievements of the veterinary profession; encourages the advancement of standards; and, develops public awareness of veterinary medicine and science, for example, via the development of a Fellow on the Public Understanding of Veterinary Science.	Fellows APC		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New Board members are creating the plan for Fellow outreach and interactions over the next few months, for example, Fellows on Tour and wider speaking opportunities.</li> <li>• Plans underway for Fellowship Day 2023, with Dame Sally Davies confirmed as guest speaker, and two interactive sessions on Net Zero and behaviourism planned. 34 successful 2023 applicants have been informed and invited to Fellowship Day</li> <li>• FSAP looking at behaviourism and net zero with specific working groups appointed.</li> <li>• Review of the application form, creation of new Assessors training course on the Academy and promotion of the application process has been started. Recruitment for both assessors and Fellows should be encouraged.</li> <li>• New Chairs for all three routes into Fellowship will be elected this autumn.</li> </ul>
8. Review new ways of reaching consensus and driving change within our leadership and governance structure.	Exec Officers		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work of Council Culture Working Group continues and will be reviewed at the end of 2023. Some decisions coming to September Council meeting.</li> <li>• New induction process was rolled out with new Council members.</li> <li>• Reflection sessions Council meetings to discuss how effectively business was conducted continue.</li> <li>• Workshop sessions to be planned with external speakers on board effectiveness.</li> <li>• Chairs training taking place in September; other training sessions in the pipeline.</li> </ul>
9. Work with the BVA and the BVNA to evaluate the success of the first action plans for Vet Futures and VN Futures respectively, assess whether the ambitions remain relevant, and develop new action plans accordingly. Work with the FVE to support the delivery of Vet Futures Europe.	Exec		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Case studies on VF successes need to be refreshed, to form part of VF evaluation document (joint with BVA). Some delays due to resourcing.</li> <li>• VF part two under consideration.</li> <li>• VN Futures evaluation report published in September 2022; animation to outline achievements and future activities launched at BVA Live May 2023.</li> <li>• VNF sessions to be held at BVNA Congress Oct 2023.</li> </ul>

## D: Confidence

**Ambition:** in order to deliver our Strategic Plan we must not only have the mandate that is secured by the Veterinary Surgeons Act and our Royal Charter, but also the confidence to succeed that will be brought by the right underpinning – the governance, people, finance, communications and IT structures that are crucial to our success.

Action	Who?	Status	Recent activity/next steps
1. Review the bedding-in of the 2018 Legislative Reform Order to ensure that our Council and committee structure is efficient, effective, and transparent, and provides the right level of strategic oversight coupled with skills-based input to allow the College to function to the best of its abilities.	Officers Exec		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Scoping for informal review - although this may be superseded by work considering new governance structure as part of legislative changes (meanwhile, second five-year review for the LRO that separated PIC and DC from Council underway with Defra).</li> <li>Some of these issues under consideration by Council Culture Working Group.</li> <li>Governance Manual in progress.</li> <li>Action plan to resolve gaps vs Charity Code being worked through by Senior Team and reviewed by Audit and Risk Committee.</li> </ul>
2. Review the structure of all of our groups operating below committee level, to ensure the right mix of skills are available to tackle the tasks at hand and that each group has clear membership, purpose, principles, time-frame and sense of what success will look like.	FRC Ops		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Skills being considered as part of Council Culture project.</li> <li>Annual review of delegation scheme now routine and all groups now have ToR and greater clarity.</li> <li>New paper templates under development, along with training for secretariats.</li> <li>Paper ref the number of Council and Committee meetings we have, and their timing, coming to September meeting of Council.</li> </ul>
3. Develop and embed a meaningful dashboard to help ensure that appetite for risk is clear, risk is managed and any early warning signs are addressed.	ARC FRC Ops		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Risk process well embedded and regularly praised by Audit and Risk Committee for its effectiveness.</li> <li>Annual Business Continuity Planning meeting takes place and changes are made to the plan in response. This year's to take place 6 September.</li> <li>Work ongoing on risk dashboard and assurance map, reviewed by Audit and Risk Committee.</li> <li>Greater visibility of Corporate Risk Register now available to Council. Workshop to take place on 7 September.</li> </ul>
4. Collate and review our member and service-user feedback on an ongoing basis, against key performance indicators, and work with RCVS Knowledge to employ a quality improvement and innovation methodology to ensure we are providing services that meet the needs of our audiences and society at large.	Ops Head of I&E		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New KPIs to be rolled out for new presidential year. A draft policy has been discussed with Officers and a revised version to come to November Council.</li> <li>Process for reviewing / analysing all complaints about RCVS, regardless of area of work, still ongoing.</li> <li>New Customer Services team set up on a trial basis; going well.</li> <li>Vet and VN exit survey data now being gathered.</li> <li>Zero tolerance for abuse of our staff statement now on the website.</li> <li>Members' views will be gathered as part of the 2024 Surveys of the Professions.</li> </ul>

Action	Who?	Status	Recent activity/next steps
<p>5. Put in place a People Strategy that develops our talent, diversity, leadership and culture, across the staff team, Council and committee members, examiners, assessors and all others who work on behalf of the College.</p>	<p>Exec People</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data ref current position on gender and other diversity strands due to be presented to FRC shortly – delayed, data available</li> <li>• Learning management system platform under development.</li> <li>• Change of pension provider has been implemented for staff who were members of the current scheme. Review of remaining scheme to take place.</li> <li>• Data dashboard under construction to highlight People data to include diversity and gender information.</li> <li>• First cohort has completed new Guide Your Progress Course for middle managers and been very well received. Work underway to review support to evaluate level ‘Lead’ and ‘Translate’.</li> <li>• New employee network launched.</li> <li>• Update of staff induction and probation processes in progress, majority of the policies are complete with some minor adjustments based on feedback being updated. Induction is now managed monthly, with less requirement of colleagues to support; more enhancements in progress.</li> <li>• Regular training sessions for managers – in the form of clinics – now being rolled out. Rotation arrangements for new managers and emerging managers underway, and additional training.</li> <li>• Review of payroll and people systems underway, to reduce repetition and administration, provide a better service to managers and improve the experience for new recruits. Likely to be completed by end of year.</li> <li>• Greater support for all colleagues impacted by parental leave rules - by means of detailed guidance, simple language and advice - being developed.</li> <li>• Council Culture Working Group completed phase of work for 2023 – approval required by Council in September meeting.</li> <li>• Large volume of external recruitment for committee appointments completed.</li> <li>• Lieu time policy under construction for staff.</li> <li>• Review of notice periods underway.</li> <li>• Launch of Neurodiversity training for People team and ST to take place in Nov, followed by all-employee roll out by year end.</li> <li>• Career web page review underway to better promote career opportunities externally.</li> <li>• Apprentice recruitment underway – first apprentice recruitment (not apprenticeship funding).</li> <li>• Internal ‘engagement hub’ agreed, implementation prior to year-end.</li> </ul>

Action	Who?	Status	Recent activity/next steps
6. Ensure our financial systems are customer-focused, fraud-resistant and efficient, and improve communication and clarity over where money is spent and its impact.	FRC Ops		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure database upgrade includes a flexible customer interface.</li> </ul>
7. Develop and implement a technology strategy that puts digital first, is collaborative, and focuses on simplification and convergence.	Exec Digital FRC		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Platforms for NPL, PDR and Stanley (PSS) purchased late spring 2023 from supplier.</li> <li>CRM review project has been through robust process, project board will make recommendation to Finance and Resources Committee in September.</li> </ul>
8. Purchase a new property that aims to serve the needs of the College for the next twenty years, while not putting an undue future financial commitment on our members.	Estates Ops		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Peldon Rose hired to support commercial strategy and refurbishment approach. Meetings taken place with staff and Council, and staff survey taken place. Feasibility plan has been received. Work reports to HS Refurbishment Group.</li> <li>First set of tenants now exited HS; second set of tenants due to leave end of September.</li> <li>Tender process under way to select team to draw up refurbishment requirements.</li> <li>Planning applications due to be submitted.</li> </ul>
9. Put in place a communications strategy that will focus on clarifying what we are, and what we are not, and be stronger about calling out those who seek to undermine the College; own our shortcomings and be clear about where and how we will change; and be bolder about celebrating our successes and our unique contribution to animal health and welfare, and public health. Empower our wider team to become communications ambassadors for the College.	Comms		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RCVS comms survey of key stakeholders (including professions, public etc) to establish preferences and gain feedback.</li> <li>Use feedback to devise coms strategy to support strategic ambitions, departmental activities and stakeholder requirements.</li> <li>Produce social media guidance.</li> <li>Social media strategy under development as part of broader planning work.</li> <li>Development of Language/Content Style Guide underway as part of web content review.</li> <li>Brand development review ongoing, to be aligned with new building presentation.</li> </ul>



Action	Who?	Status	Recent activity/next steps
<p>10. Develop and implement a corporate social responsibility strategy that befits an organisation that works in the public interest.</p>	<p>FRC Ops</p>	<p style="background-color: #FFA500;"></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environmental impact of any new building under consideration, plus how it can help us integrate into, and support, local community, for example, working with local schools.</li> <li>• Work ongoing with UK Health Alliance on Climate Change (UKHACC).</li> <li>• Regular reviews of investment portfolio to ensure it aligns with our values.</li> <li>• Push to encourage staff to make more use of volunteering days to support social responsibility of the organisation.</li> <li>• Working towards Investors in the Environment (iE) Silver once in new building (we secured Bronze for another year in 2023).</li> <li>• Consideration of carbon off-setting line in 2025 budget.</li> <li>• Sustainability considered for VN Pre-Registration Examinations. Reduction of single-use items, reuse, repurpose or recycle where possible.</li> <li>• Events strategy – eg around merchandise and give-aways – reflects environmental policy.</li> </ul>

<b>Summary</b>	
Meeting	RCVS Council
Date	7 September 2023
Title	Terms of Reference of the Audit and Risk Committee (ARC)
Summary	This paper outlines the agreed proposed changes to the Audit and Risk Committee's Terms of Reference (ToR) following a review and gap analysis undertaken by the Committee on 3 July 2023.
Decisions required	Council is asked to consider the proposed changes outlined in this paper and to approve the amended version of the ToR attached in Annex A.
Attachments	Annex A: Updated ARC ToR - September 2023 (tracked changes)
Author	Alan Quinn Byrne Governance Manager / Secretary to ARC

<b>Classifications</b>		
<b>Document</b>	<b>Classification<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Rationales<sup>2</sup></b>
Paper	Unclassified	n/a
Annex A	Unclassified	n/a

<b><sup>1</sup>Classifications explained</b>	
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	general issues which can be disclosed, for example in reports to committees and Council.
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<b><sup>2</sup>Classification rationales</b>	
Confidential	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To allow the Committee or Council to come to a view itself, before presenting to and/or consulting with others</li> <li>2. To maintain the confidence of another organisation</li> <li>3. To protect commercially sensitive information</li> <li>4. To maintain public confidence in and/or uphold the reputation of the veterinary professions and/or the RCVS</li> </ol>
Private	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. To protect information which may contain personal data, special category data, and/or criminal offence data, as listed under the General Data Protection Regulation</li> </ol>

## Introduction

1. The Audit and Risk Committee undertook a review and gap analysis of its Terms of Reference (ToR) at an extraordinary meeting held on Monday, 3 July 2023. The following changes were proposed by the Committee:
  - An additional sentence stating that College staff were not to be present at private meetings with external auditors should be added to paragraph 18.
  - A definition of how RCVS Conducts 'internal audit' should be included in the ToR for clarity.
2. The ARC's ToR has been amended in line with these proposals. Council is invited to approve the changes highlighted in **Annex A** (see paragraphs 2(b) and 18) for inclusion into the Delegation Scheme document.



## Audit and Risk Committee – Terms of Reference

1. The Audit and Risk Committee shall support the Council by reviewing the comprehensiveness and reliability of assurances and internal controls in meeting the Council's oversight responsibilities. The Committee is a non-executive committee and has no executive powers except as set out below.
2. The Committee has delegated authority to:
  - a) monitor the Council's risk management arrangements;
  - b) approve the internal audit programme; and,
  - c) advise the Council on the comprehensiveness and reliability of assurances and internal controls, including internal and external audit arrangements, and on the implications of assurances provided in respect of risk and control.
3. The Committee may request the attendance of any employee or member, as set out in paragraph 16 below, and may incur expenditure for the purpose of obtaining advice in terms of paragraph 20 below.
4. The Committee is accountable to the Council. The minutes of each Committee meeting shall be circulated to the Council. The Committee shall report to the Council annually on its work. It may also submit separately to the Council its advice on issues where it considers that the Council should take action. Where the Committee considers there is evidence of *ultra vires* transactions or evidence of improper acts, the Chair of the Committee shall raise the matter at a formal Council meeting.
5. The Committee shall have five members, but may operate with fewer while a vacancy exists, provided the quorum is maintained. The members shall include two Council members, of whom one shall be a lay member and one a registrant member. Neither the President, Vice-Presidents, nor the Treasurer shall be members of the Committee. The members of the Committee who are not Council members (the "external members") shall have appropriate audit and risk management experience.
6. The Council will elect one of the external members serving on the Committee as Chair, based on relevant background and skills. The Committee will elect a Vice-Chair and in the absence of the Chair, the Vice-Chair will chair the meeting.

7. The Committee shall support the Council by reviewing and advising the Council on the operation and effectiveness of the arrangements which are in place across the whole of the Council's activities that support the achievement of the Council's objectives. In particular, the Committee shall review the adequacy of:
  - a) all risk and control related disclosure statements, together with any accompanying internal audit statement, where appropriate, external audit opinion or other appropriate independent assurances, prior to endorsement by the Council;
  - b) the underlying assurance processes that indicate the degree of the achievement of corporate objectives, the effectiveness of the management of principal risks and the appropriateness of the above disclosure statements;
  - c) the policies for ensuring compliance with relevant regulatory, legal, governance and code of conduct requirements; and
  - d) the policies and procedures for all work related to fraud and corruption.
8. In carrying out this work the Committee will primarily utilise the work of internal audit, where appropriate, external audit and other assurance functions. It will also seek reports and assurances from Department Managers as appropriate, concentrating on the over-arching systems of governance, risk management and internal control together with indicators of their effectiveness.
9. In reviewing risk management arrangements, the Committee shall draw attention to areas where:
  - a) risk is being appropriately managed and controls are adequate (no action needed);
  - b) risk is inadequately controlled (action needed to improve control);
  - c) risk is over-controlled (resource being wasted which could be diverted to another use); and,
  - d) there is a lack of evidence to support a conclusion (if this concerns areas which are material to the organisation's functions, more audit and/or assurance work will be required).
10. In relation to internal audit, where appropriate, the Committee shall:
  - a) ensure that there is effective internal audit activity that complies with any applicable standards and provides appropriate independent assurance to the Council, Audit and Risk Committee, Secretary and Registrar;
  - b) The internal audit activity will include reviews into RCVS internal processes, policies and procedures. These reviews will be based on identified high risk areas from the corporate risk register and assurance map.
    - a) ~~consider the appointment of advisers, the cost of the service and any questions of resignation or dismissal and make appropriate recommendations to the Council;~~

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- c) ensure that the College makes adequate resource available to internal audit activity, where required;
- d) review the need for an internal audit strategy, operational plan and work programme;
- e) consider the major findings of the internal audit/review work, where carried out, and management's response; and,
- f) annually review the effectiveness of internal audit.

11. In relation to external audit, the Committee shall:

- a) consider the appointment and performance of the external auditor, the audit fee and any questions of resignation or dismissal and make appropriate recommendations to the Council;
- b) discuss and agree with the external auditor, before the audit commences, the nature and scope of the audit as set out in the external audit plan and their local evaluation of audit risks;
- c) review the work and findings of the external auditor, consider the implications and management's responses to their work; and,
- d) review all external audit reports, including agreement of the annual audit letter before submission to the Council and any work undertaken outside the annual audit plan, together with the appropriateness of management responses.

12. The Committee shall review the annual financial statements, focusing particularly on:

- a) disclosures relevant to the terms of reference of the Committee;
- b) changes in, and compliance with, accounting policies and practices;
- c) unadjusted mis-statements in the financial statements;
- d) major judgmental areas; and,
- e) significant adjustments resulting from the audit.

13. The Committee shall ensure that the systems for financial reporting to the Council, including those of budgetary control, are subject to review as to completeness and accuracy of the information provided to the Council.

14. The Committee shall meet not less than three times a year. The external auditors may request a meeting if they consider that one is necessary.

15. Only Committee members shall be entitled to attend meetings of the Committee. The Treasurer, CEO, Secretary and/or Registrar, and Director of Operations shall normally attend meetings. Representatives from the external auditors shall attend meetings as required for relevant items. The President and other Council members may attend meetings at the invitation of, or with the agreement of, the Chair of the Committee.
16. The Committee may request any employee or member to attend a meeting to assist with its discussions on any particular matter or to provide any information it may reasonably require in order to fulfil its remit. All employees and members shall co-operate with any reasonable request made by the Committee.
17. The Committee may ask any or all non-members to withdraw for all or part of a meeting if it so decides. In such an instance, the Chair shall ensure that a proper record is made of the meeting.
18. The senior representatives of external audit shall have free and confidential access to the Chair of the Committee. At least once a year, the Committee shall provide an opportunity to meet privately with the external auditors. College staff will not be present during these confidential meetings.
19. The Committee may investigate any activity within its terms of reference. It may seek any information it requires from any employee and all employees shall co-operate with any request made by the Committee.
20. The Committee may obtain legal or other independent professional advice and secure the attendance of external advisers with relevant experience and expertise if it considers this necessary, within the budget approved by the Council. The CEO and/or Registrar shall ensure that appropriate secretariat support is provided to the Chair and Committee.

Remit relating to accreditation functions of the College

21. The Committee will receive assurances that the quality assurance work undertaken by the College in relation to the accreditation of veterinary degree programmes and veterinary nursing educational institutions is operating in accordance with its published procedures. This process of assurance is also designed to contribute to compliance with the requirements for membership with the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) that 'Agencies should have in place processes for internal quality assurance related to defining, assuring and enhancing the quality and integrity of their activities'. This will be achieved by:
  - a) at the beginning of each calendar year, the Committee will be provided with a work plan, detailing the accreditation visitations that are scheduled for the forthcoming year;
  - b) brief progress reports against this work plan will be provided as a standing item at each meeting of the Committee. These reports will also highlight any major concerns or issues that had arisen as a result of quality assurance activities conducted in the period covered by the report;



- c) an annual report will be produced at the end of each calendar year. This will be presented to the Committee together with the work plan for the next calendar year. The annual report would be expected to include:
- confirmation that quality assurance activities have been completed in line with the work plan, or reasons for any variation;
  - actions that have been taken or that are planned as a result of discussion by committees;
  - actions that have been taken or that are planned as a result of feedback from stakeholders (visitors/universities); and,
  - trends and themes identified in information presented year on year.
22. Findings of the Committee arising from assurances received on the quality assurance activities of the College in relation to veterinary degree programmes and veterinary nursing educational institutions shall also be circulated to the Primary Qualifications Subcommittee (PQSC), Education Committee and the Veterinary Nurses Education Committee.
23. The Committee may choose to invite attendance from representatives of Education Committee and VN Education Committee for the purpose of receiving assurances on quality assurance activities undertaken by those Committees.
24. Where an appointed member of the Audit and Risk Committee is also involved with the education quality assurance activities of the RCVS, they shall not be permitted voting rights on any issues discussed however they may remain present at the meeting for points of clarification.

<b>Summary</b>	
Meeting	Council
Date	7 September 2023
Title	RCVS committee schedule for 2024
Summary	This paper provides proposals for a change to the RCVS committee schedule for 2024 to better meet the needs of individual committees going forward. This will be used as a pilot for the change and reviewed in 2024 for adoption in future years.
Decisions required	Is Council content with the proposals?
Attachments	Annex A: proposed Council and committee schedule for 2024
Author	Lizzie Lockett CEO <a href="mailto:l.lockett@rcvs.org.uk">l.lockett@rcvs.org.uk</a>

<b>Classifications</b>		
<b>Document</b>	<b>Classification<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Rationales<sup>2</sup></b>
Paper	Unclassified	n/a
Annex A	Unclassified	n/a

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## RCVS committee schedule

### Background

1. As has been discussed at previous Council and Committee meetings, the principle of four annual 'committee weeks' for the main standing committees is no longer fit for purpose. While it can be time-saving and cost-effective to have all of the main meetings during the same week, it also takes a large chunk out of some staff and Council members' diaries.
2. Furthermore, as recent history has shown, for some committees four meetings per year is not enough; for others too many. Now that we can meet online, we also have the ability to meet on a more ad hoc basis for shorter, task-oriented meetings.
3. The proposal is that we lose a formal committee week, so committees can meet at times in the year that suit them. We avoid having two meetings per day as that gives scope for meetings to be longer if necessary and puts less pressure on the staff team.
4. A mix of hybrid and remote remains, to balance the benefits of in-person meetings with the inclusivity and reduced carbon impact of online. Where meetings are in person, people will be strongly encouraged to attend in person. It will be for the committee chairs to decide which meetings will be in person and which remote, although it is to be hoped that at least 50% of committee meetings will be remote as this has a positive impact on budget and sustainability. As now, the majority of meetings below committee level will be remote.
5. The following frequency of meetings is proposed:

Committee	Times per year	Format/timing	Any other comments
APC	Three	One in person, two remote February, May, October	
ARC	Four	Two in person, two remote February, May, Sept, Nov	May meeting on same day as FRC for purposes of joint meeting ref audit
Education	Four	Two in person, two remote February, May, Sept, Nov	
FRC	Four	Two in person, two remote February, May, Sept, Nov	May meeting on same day as ARC for purposes of joint meeting ref audit
PIC/DC Liaison	Three	All remote February, May, Oct	

Committee	Times per year	Format/timing	Any other comments
Registration	Two	Two remote, and ad hoc meetings – by email or remote – for temp reg applications as required April, October	Data on registration stats to be produced quarterly and hosted in Board Effects.
Standards	Six	Three in person, three remote February, April, June, September, October, December	Plus other ad hoc as required.
VN Council	Four	Two in person, two remote February, May, Sept, Nov	

6. It will remain up to groups below committee level to decide how many times and when they meet, although the rhythm of those meetings will need to take account of the timing of the parent committees to which they report.
7. It is accepted that the above may not always be possible to stick to if additional business comes along. Equally if there is no need for a meeting, no meeting needs to take place.
8. If we move to a more committee-centric approach (ie not a one-size-fits-all) it may no longer be possible to have reports from all committees at all Council meetings. However, given comments from Council members about the huge amount of paperwork required to be read for meetings, this may be seen as a positive. Reports can instead be hosted on BoardEffects and a message circulated to say they are available to be read. As now, any decisions that a committee feels needs to be escalated to Council can be.
9. It is anticipated that Council meeting dates will remain the same, ie January, March, June, July (AGM), September and November. The Council dates for 2024 are as follows:
  - a. Thursday 18 January – virtual
  - b. Thursday 14 March – in-person, offsite – vet school?
  - c. Thursday 6 June – in-person, Hardwick Street
  - d. Thursday 12 September – in-person, Hardwick Street
  - e. Thursday 7 November - virtual
10. The annex is a draft schedule for consideration. When considering the schedule, key is the frequency and timing in relation to each other. It will be impossible to find dates that everyone can attend, although these have been checked to ensure that committee chairs can be present. The grey boxes are likely school holidays although of course these vary hugely.

**Decision**

11. Is Council content with the proposed changes?

**Annex A – proposed committee and Council schedule for 2024**  
**January 2024**

Jan 24	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Week 1	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Week 2	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Week 3	15	16	17	18 Council (virtual)	19	20	21
Week 4	22	23	24	25 SPVS Congress	26 SPVS Congress	27 SPVS Congress	28
Week 5	29	30	31				

February 2024

Feb 24	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Week 5				1	2	3	4
Week 6	5	6	7 APC	8	9	10	11
Week 7	12	13 ARC	14 Standards	15 PIC DC Liaison	16	17	18
Week 8	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
Week 9	26	27 Education	28 VN Council	29 FRC			

## March 2024

Mar 24	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Week 9					1	2	3
Week 10	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Week 11	11	12	13	14 Council (in person, vet school?)	15	16	17
Week 12	18	19	20	21 BSAVA Congress	22 BSAVA Congress	23 BSAVA Congress	24
Week 13	25	26	27	28	29	30	31



## April 2024

Apr 24	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Week 14	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Week 15	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Week 16	15	16 Standards	17	18	19	20	21
Week 17	22	23 Registration	24	25 VMG Congress	26 VMG Congress	27	28
Week 18	29	30					

## May 2024

May 24	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Week 18			1	2	3	4	5
Week 19	6	7	8 APC	9	10	11	12
Week 20	13	14 ARC FRC	15	16	17	18	19
Week 21	20	21 Education	22 VN Council	23 PIC DC Liaison	24	25	26
Week 22	27	28	29	30	31		

## June 2024

Jun 24	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Week 22						1	2
Week 23	3	4	5	6 Council (Harwick Street) BVA Live	7 BVA Live	8	9
Week 24	10	11	12 Standards	13	14	15	16
Week 25	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
Week 26	24	25	26	27	28	29	30

July 2024

Jul 24	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Week 27	1	2	3 RCVS Day rehearsal	4	5 RCVS Day	6	7
Week 28	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Week 29	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
Week 30	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
Week 31	29	30	31				

## August 2024

Aug 24	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Week 31				1	2	3	4
Week 32	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Week 33	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
Week 34	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
Week 35	26	27	28	29	30	31	

## September 2024

Sep 24	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Week 35							1
Week 36	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Week 37	9	10 ARC	11 BEVA Congress	12 Council (Hardwick Street) BEVA Congress	13 BEVA Congress	14 BEVA Congress	15
Week 38	16	17 Education	18 VN Council	19	20	21	22
Week 39	23	24 Standards	25	26 FRC Possibly BVA Members Day?	27	28	29
Week 40	30						

## October 2024

Oct 24	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Week 40		1	2 APC	3	4 BVNA Congress?	5 BVNA Congress?	6 BVNA Congress?
Week 41	7	8	9	10 PIC DC Liaison	11	12	13
Week 42	14	15	16	17 BCVA Congress	18 BCVA Congress	19 BCVA Congress	20
Week 43	21	22 Registration	23 Standards	24	25	26	27
Week 44	28	29	30	31			

## November 2024

Nov 24	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Week 44					1	2	3
Week 45	4	5 FRC	6	7 Council (Virtual)	8	9  ECC Congress	10  ECC Congress
Week 46	11	12 ARC	13 VN Council	14 Possible LVS?	15 Possible LVS?	16	17
Week 47	18	19 Education	20	21 Possible LVS?	22 Possible LVS?	23	24
Week 48	25	26	27	28	29	30	



## December 2024

Dec 24	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Week 48							1
Week 49	2	3 Standards	4	5	6	7	8
Week 50	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Week 51	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
Week 52	23	24	25	26	27	28	29
	30	31					

<b>Summary</b>	
Meeting	Council
Date	7 September 2023
Title	Council Culture Working Group (CCWG) update.
Summary	This paper provides an update to Council from the CCWG on the approach to whole Council effectiveness and reflection conversations. It also shows the progress the Group has made since its establishment in November 2022.
Decisions required	To approve the actions recommended by CCWG in relation to whole Council effectiveness and reflection conversations and to agree that the group should continue its work until the end of the year.
Attachments	Annex A – Results of survey Annex B – Reflective conversations documentation Annex C – CCWG action plan
Author	Lisa Hall People Director <a href="mailto:l.hall@rcvs.org.uk">l.hall@rcvs.org.uk</a>

<b>Classifications</b>		
<b>Document</b>	<b>Classification<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Rationales<sup>2</sup></b>
Paper	Unclassified	n/a
Annex A	Unclassified	n/a
Annex B	Unclassified	n/a

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## Whole Council Effectiveness and Reflection conversations

### Background

1. The CCWG was formed in November 2022 following the coming together of five groups exploring the effectiveness of decision-making as a result of feedback from work undertaken by Mike Farrar.
  2. The main activity for the Group has been completed, with the exception of the items to be discussed at this meeting.
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    10. The main activity for the Group has been completed, with the exception of the items to be discussed at this meeting.

### Whole Council effectiveness

4. The CCGW was presented with a number of different methods used by other organisations to access the effectiveness of decision-making groups. The CCWG identified the approach shown in Annex A based on The Governance App was likely to be most effective and able to support development of Council's effectiveness.
5. All Council members were requested to complete the survey in April 2023 in order to establish a baseline of information. All members completed the survey (24 in total).
6. The survey consisted of 64 questions broken down into seven areas, those being:
  - a. Organisational purpose
  - b. Integrity
  - c. Leadership
  - d. Board effectiveness
  - e. ED&I
  - f. Openness and accountability
  - g. Decision making
7. The results of the survey are presented at Annex A. The range of scores is highlighted as follows:
  - a. Red - a score of less than 3
  - b. Amber - a score of more than 3 but less than 4
  - c. Green - a score of more 4 or above (the maximum score being 5)
8. The findings were positive, with 'organisational purpose', 'integrity' and 'decision making' showing strong scores. Areas that were identified as needing some consideration were 'ED&I' and 'openness and accountability'.
9. In terms of the areas that received positive feedback, the CCWG made no recommendations beyond existing ongoing activities.
10. In respect of the areas that indicated the need for attention, the CCWG suggests the following approach:
  - a. Continuing to use the end-of-meeting Council reflection session as an opportunity to validate positive areas and to discuss areas that may require attention.

- b. Using the individual reflection conversations (next item in this paper) to highlight areas that may require some individual and/or collective development and support.
  - c. Continuing with EDI training and other training highlighted through the CCWG such as Finance, and Committee Chair training.
  - d. Strengthening induction for new Council members (already in place)
  - e. Updating the Governance Handbook and using the survey questions to help signpost information.
  - f. Improving the candidate election pack to support those looking to stand for Council better to understand expectations prior to being appointed or elected.
11. It is recommended that Council completes the survey exercise again in 2024 (around April time) to assess progress and consider any further actions.

#### Individual reflection conversations

12. The CCWG discussed the template (Annex B), which would be used to guide a conversation between the President and each Council member. The purpose of the template is to ensure a consistent approach to having a good conversation about individual Council members' development to support the effectiveness of Council overall.
13. The template provides guidance on how the conversation may take shape in order to support both the President and member have a positive discussion.
14. It is anticipated that each new President will wish to have an initial conversation with Council members at the start of the new Council year, to set the scene about expectations and what support may be required by each member. Towards the end of each Council year the reflection conversation will take place to look back on the members contribution and give a two-way assessment of the year.
15. It is advised that the document is completed by both the President and the Council member with the exception of section four which should be completed by The President and section five which should be completed by any nominated contributors. Any nominated contributors should be selected by the Council member.
16. By having the reflection conversation it is expected that those areas of the whole Council effectiveness which may need some attention will be highlighted and the required action taken.

#### CCWG deliverables

17. Over the last ten months, the CCWG has delivered on the action plan in Annex 3. To continue to support the work around whole Council effectiveness, induction and reflection conversations etc it is anticipated this work will continue with the CCWG until the end of the year, upon which it will be reviewed.

#### Next steps

18. Council is asked to support the recommendations by the CCGW regarding the whole Council effectiveness actions along with the reflection conversation implementation. Council is also requested to support future action regarding the CCWG continuing till year end.



## Annex A

<b>Organisational purpose</b>	
We understand what the RCVS is here to achieve.	4.44
We can demonstrate that the RCVS is achieving its purposes under the Act and Charter.	4.04
We periodically check that our purposes are relevant.	3.36
We can all explain the RCVS's public benefit.	3.8
We regularly evaluate the difference the RCVS is making.	2.96
We regularly review our financial sustainability.	4.32
We recognise our responsibility to the wider environment we operate in.	4.12
We act in a way that's consistent with the RCVS's values.	4.16
<b>Integrity</b>	
We have a clear set of aims and a plan for achieving them.	4.04
We act with honesty, trustworthiness and care.	4.48
We act in the best interests of animal health and welfare, and public health.	4.28
We make objective and independent decisions.	3.88
No one person or group has undue influence in the RCVS.	3.84
All of our decisions are consistent with the RCVS's values.	4.08
The RCVS follows the law, relevant codes and standards, and other good practice initiatives.	4.28
We promote a culture in which everyone feels safe and respected.	4.08
We understand how real and perceived conflicts of interests can affect the RCVS's performance and reputation.	4.2
<b>Leadership</b>	
Council members disclose any actual or potential conflicts and deal with these in line with the RCVS's governance documentation and a regularly reviewed conflicts of interest policy.	4.00
We live the RCVS's vision and values.	4.04
We take collective and individual responsibility for our actions.	3.96
We have clear priorities, structures and processes.	4.00
We have proper procedures for the appointment, supervision, support, appraisal, remuneration and, if necessary, dismissal of the Chief Executive.	3.80
Council members' roles and responsibilities are formally recorded.	3.92
Our values underpin our decisions and the RCVS's activities.	4.12

We recognise, respect and welcome diverse, different and, at times, conflicting Council member views.	4.08
We provide oversight, direction, support and constructive challenge to the organisation and its staff.	3.76
Staff feel confident and able to provide the information, advice and feedback necessary to Council.	3.72
<b>Board effectiveness</b>	
We give sufficient time to the RCVS to carry out our responsibilities effectively.	3.84
Our culture, behaviours and processes help us to be effective.	3.6
We take decisions collectively and confidently.	3.88
Once decisions are made, Council unites behind them and accepts them as binding.	3.72
Where differences of opinion arise, we take time to consider the range of perspectives and outcomes, respecting all viewpoints.	4.2
Council has, and regularly considers, the skills, knowledge and experience it needs to govern, lead and deliver the RCVS's purposes effectively	3.48
Council is an appropriate size that the needs of the RCVS's work can be carried out and changes to Council's composition can be managed without too much disruption.	3.4
Council members receive a proper induction when they join Council that covers all areas of the RCVS's work.	3.36
Council reviews its own performance every year, including that of the officer team.	2.8
<b>ED&amp;I</b>	
The principles of equality, diversity and inclusion are embedded in the organisation and help to deliver the RCVS's public benefit.	4.28
Council is more effective because it reflects different perspectives, experiences and skills, including, where applicable, from stakeholders.	4.04
We assess our own understanding of equality, diversity and inclusion and identify any gaps in understanding which could be filled by discussion, learning, research or information.	3.44
We regularly assess the RCVS's approach to equality, diversity and inclusion.	3.36
Council assesses how it demonstrates inclusive behaviours in its decision making and how it engages with all its stakeholders.	3.36
We set a clear organisational approach to equality, diversity and inclusion in line with the RCVS's aims, strategy, culture and values.	3.96
Our approach to equality, diversity and inclusion is supported by appropriate plans, policies, milestones, targets and timelines.	3.56
We ensure that there are appropriate arrangements and resources in place to monitor and achieve the organisation's equality, diversity and inclusion plans and targets.	3.36



We lead the organisation's progress towards achieving its equality, diversity and inclusion plans and targets and discuss updates on this.	3.36
We periodically take part in learning and/or reflection about equality, diversity and inclusion and understand our responsibilities in this area.	3.52
<b>Openness and accountability</b>	
The organisation's work and impact are appreciated by all its stakeholders.	2.64
The RCVS is seen to have legitimacy in representing its stakeholders.	3.24
Council identifies the key stakeholders with an interest in the RCVS's work.	4.08
We make sure that there is a strategy for regular and effective communication with stakeholders about the RCVS's purposes, values, work and achievements.	3.64
We consult stakeholders about significant changes to the RCVS's policies.	4.08
We get regular reports on the positive and negative feedback and complaints given to the RCVS.	3.28
We learn from mistakes and use this learning to improve performance and internal decision-making.	3.36
We have a transparent, well-publicised, effective and timely process for making, handling and resolving complaints.	3.72
We publish the process for setting the remuneration of any senior staff, and their remuneration levels, in the RCVS's annual report.	3.96
<b>Decision making</b>	
We are clear that Council's main focus is on strategy, performance and assurance, rather than operational matters.	3.64
We have a sound decision-making and monitoring framework which helps the organisation deliver its purposes under the Act and Charter.	3.88
We are aware of the range of financial and non-financial risk we need to monitor and manage.	4.12
Our committees have suitable terms of reference and membership.	4.4
The work of any third party suppliers or services is carried out in the interest of the RCVS, and in line with its values.	3.92
Our operational plans and budgets are in line with the RCVS's purposes, strategic aims and resources.	4.36
We regularly monitor and check performance against the RCVS's strategic aims, operational plans and budgets.	4.04
We regularly review the RCVS's specific significant risk and make plans to mitigate and manage them appropriately.	4.12
We review the effectiveness of the RCVS's approach to risk at least every year.	3.96
We have an effective process for appointing and reviewing the RCVS's external auditors.	4.12

**Annex B**

Year		Name	
<p>The review should take place between May and June. This will allow for discussion based on the majority of the Council year and should take place prior to the new Council year beginning.</p> <p>The President will be responsible for leading the conversation.</p> <p>CMs should come prepared to actively contribute to the conversation.</p> <p>Meetings will be booked by the PA to the Registrar</p>			
Section 1: Reflections on the year			
How would you describe your contribution to Council this year?	What helped and what hindered your contribution?	Whats worked well and less well?	
<p>This is an opportunity for the CM to give an overview of how they have contributed. Conversation should be based around the key deliverables and Nolan principles.</p>	<p>The CM should make an honest assessment of contribution, being clear about any obstacles.</p>	<p>The CM should again make an honest contribution to the discussion being clear about any challenges.</p>	

Section 2: Thinking ahead			
What support would you benefit from for this coming year?	Are there any specific development areas you would like to concentrate on?	What do you specifically want to focus on achieving?	
The CM should be aware of the strategic objectives for the next year so they are able to say what support they need. It may be helpful to understand what feedback has been received from others as this may aid this part of the conversation.	The CM should consider what challenges they have faced which may explain areas for development.	Thinking about Council’s objectives, what might be the areas that the CM would prefer to be involved with – accepting that this may not always be possible.	
Section 3: Collective contribution			
What’s worked well for Council this year?	What areas do you think need focus?	What would your feedback be to The President?	What support does the group need as a collective?
Positive feedback should be given in this section, thinking about the group as a whole, not individual contributions.	The CM should not isolate individuals but think collectively about the whole group.	The CM should feedback constructively, they may wish to provide feedback via email rather than directly although direct feedback should be the preferred method. The People Director may be able to help to frame the feedback if there is something less positive to be provided.	The CM should think about why they are providing the feedback, what has made them say this and what evidence can they bring to support their comments.

#### Section 4: Presidents feedback and reflections

This section is for the President to provide a summary of their observations throughout the year. Care should be taken to be constructive and ideally is there is feedback which is developmental this should have been provided before the reflection conversation and given in a timely manner to when any observations took place.

#### Section 5: Nominated others feedback and reflections

The CM should ideally invite feedback from the wider Council group, along with others who they may come into contact with e.g. RCVS employees. It is suggested that 2 or 3 people are contacted to provide feedback.

## Annex C

Theme		Actions agreed to date	Next steps/timing	Action owner	Final approval
Code of conduct	Update of complaints process	New process agreed at November 2022 Council meeting.	Complete	Eleanor Ferguson	Council
	Review of Code of Conduct	Revised Code including updated Nolan Principles, consistency with Council's 'How We Work' statement and other minor amendments agreed by Council June 2023.	Complete	Eleanor Ferguson	Council
	Consistency in handling conflicts of interest	Develop flowchart for Council/Committee chairs to handle conflicts of interest consistently	Referred back to Executive for further development	Lizzie Lockett	Council
Skills	Skills development	Survey completed by Council members and results reviewed by Working Group. Priorities identified included duties of non-executives, finance and team working/board dynamics.	Executive to plan training programme across priority areas and identify resource requirements	Lisa Hall/Lizzie Lockett	
	Committee Chair training	Training provider identified. Training to be offered to anyone considering a chair role.	Complete	Lisa Hall	
	Reflection sessions for Chairs and President	Light-touch, developmental approach to annual reviews for all Council members agreed by Working Group.	Scheme to be considered by Council September 2023. Further work required on timings and also on roll-out to committee members.	Lisa Hall	Council
	Reflection model for all Council members				
	OPQ questionnaire	Use of OPQ questionnaire (or similar) to be incorporated as part of reflection process for Council and Committee member annual performance/development reviews.	Not progressed	Lisa Hall	
	Whole Council evaluation	Governance App questionnaire adapted for use by RCVS and completed by all Council members. Working Group held discussion on findings.	Full findings to be discussed at September Council meeting in closed session	Lisa Hall	Council

Elections	Updating of Statutory Instrument	Defra has agreed to email ballot proposal for a further year.	Complete	Eleanor Ferguson	Council
	Develop updated nominations form	Draft new election scheme to ensure greater flexibility as well as independence of challenge panel agreed by Council June 2023.	Registrar to progress with Defra	Eleanor Ferguson	Council
	Update 'job spec'	Minor changes made to candidate documentation for 2023 elections. Working Group agreed that further development of communications materials/website to be progressed for 2024 elections.	Further development of candidate materials and website (including downloadable pack) by Executive in time for 2024 elections	Eleanor Ferguson/Ian Holloway	
	Communication in nomination period	Working Group reviewed activity at April and May meetings.	Ongoing activity	Ian Holloway	
Induction	Learning activities for Council members	Priority areas identified – see above.	See above		
	Review induction	Working Group reviewed induction programme and made suggestions for incorporation into future programmes.	Executive action	Lisa Hall	
Council visibility	Implementation of agreed activities	Working Group updated on activities and provided feedback at April meeting.	Complete	Ian Holloway	
	Review and update activities				